AHMADIYYA
MUSLIM COMMUNITY
United States of America

Muslims who believe in the Messiah,
Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani[as]

An informational, literary, educational, and training magazine of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, USA

July 2013

The Ahmadiyya GAZETTE USA

Ameer Jama'at USA, Dr. Ahsanullah Zafar, leading silent prayers during 2013 Majlise Shura, USA

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

2013 JAMIA ORIENTATION COURSE

for Waqfe Nau & Non-Waqfe Nau boys
(12 years and older)

Aug 20th (Tue) – Aug 30th (Fri)

Al-Nasr Mosque
500 Bridge Street, Willingboro, NJ 08046

- Classes taught by senior Jamia students
- Daily sports activities
- Highly rated by past year's students
- Boarding and lodging is provided

Participation is limited to 50 students only!

See further details and information about how to register online at: http://www.waqfenau.us/jamia-orientation

For further information, contact Hammad Malik:
Mobile: 845-418-3793
Email: hammad.malik@alumni.utexas.net

or contact your local Waqfe Nau secretary.

Hafiz Samiullah Chaudhary
National Secretary Waqfe Nau, USA

An educational and spiritual monthly publication

Ahmadiyya Gazette USA

OFFICIAL GAZETTE OF THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN ISLAM, USA

July 2013

Patron	**Dr. Ahsanullah Zafar** Ameer Jama'at USA
Editor-in-Chief	**Dr. Naseer Ahmad**
Editor	**Dr. Karimullah Zirvi**
Editorial Advisor	**Muhammad Zafrullah Hanjra**
Cover: Latif Ahmed	*Gazette on line:*
Photos: Kalim Bhatti	*Ahmadiyyagazette.us*
	Hammad Malik

Ahmadiyya Gazette USA

Masjid Baitur Rehman
15000 Good Hope Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905

Phone: 301-879-0110 **Fax: 301-879-0115**

Editor: karimzirvi@yahoo.com
Tel. and Fax: 201-794-8122

Acronyms for salutations used in this publication

saw:	sallallahu alaihi wasallam (Peace and Blessing of Allah be upon him)
as:	alaihissalam (Peace be upon him)
ra:	radhi allahu 'anhu (May Allah be pleased with him/her)
rh:	rahimahullahu ta'ala (May Allah shower mercy on him/her)
aba:	ayyada hullah ta'ala binasrihil aziz (May Allah strengthen him with His mighty help)
swt:	subhana wa ta'ala

The Ahmadiyya Gazette USA is published by the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, Inc., at the local address:

Fazl-i-Umar Press
P.O. Box 226, Chauncey, OH 45719

Periodicals Postage Paid at Chauncey, Ohio
Postmaster: Send address changes to
The Ahmadiyya Gazette
P.O. Box 226, Chauncey, OH 45719-0226

Table of Contents

2 **Al-Qur'an**

3 **Al-Hadith**

4 **Sayings of the Promised Messiah[as]: Salat Purifies the Spirit and the Fast Illuminates the Heart**

6 **Synopsis of the Friday Sermon Delivered by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V[aba] on August 3, 2012 at Baitul Futuh Mosque, London**

10 **Obligation, Magnificence, Objectives and Benefits of Fasting and Some Related Issues: Tahir Mahmood Ahmad, Translated by: Arifa Haleem**

16 **The Holy Qur'an, Zakat: Translated from Hadiqatus Salihin: Dr. Karimullah Zirvi**

19 **Fasting in Ramadan**

26 **Ramadan—An Ideal Month for Purity of the Heart: Mubashir Mahmood, Translated by Mansura B. Minhas**

29 **Gender Equality in the Holy Qur'an: Dr. Lutf ur Rehman, Nashville, TN**

35 **New York Jama'at: Participates in 2013 NY Book Expo Shoeb Abulkalam, New York Jama'at**

36 **Conference on Muhammad—A Messenger of Peace: Saiyed Kaashif A. Qaeri, Chicago West Jama'at**

37 **Brief Report on the 30th Majlis Shura USA 2013: Syed Sajid Ahmad, Fargo, ND**

40 **Kinds of Fasts**

41 **A Letter to Mr. Imran Khan: Tahmina Ahmad**

42 **United for Peace: Alejandra Giron**

42 **San Diego Jama'at Members Meet the Mayor Dr. Tahir Ijaz**

43 **National Amila USA Approved for 2013-16**

44 **Belief Matters—Islam and Contemporary Muslims: Rafi Ahmed, Ph.D.**

49 **"Muhammad: Messenger of Peace" Conference at St. Matthew Catholic Church, Hallandale Beach, FL: Munawar Ahmad Chaudhry, President Miami Jama'at**

50 **TaQWA**

Al-Qur'an

أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ الصِّيَامِ الرَّفَثُ اِلٰى نِسَآئِكُمْ ط هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَّكُمْ وَ اَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَّهُنَّ ط عَلِمَ اللّٰهُ اَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَخْتَانُوْنَ اَنْفُسَكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَ عَفَا عَنْكُمْ ج فَالْئٰنَ بَاشِرُوْهُنَّ وَابْتَغُوْا مَا كَتَبَ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ ص وَكُلُوْا وَاشْرَبُوْا حَتّٰى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْاَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْاَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ ص ثُمَّ اَتِمُّوا الصِّيَامَ اِلَى الَّيْلِ ج وَلَا تُبَاشِرُوْهُنَّ وَ اَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُوْنَ لا فِي الْمَسٰجِدِ ط تِلْكَ حُدُوْدُ اللّٰهِ فَلَا تَقْرَبُوْهَا ط كَذٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللّٰهُ اٰيٰتِهٖ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُوْنَ 0

It is made lawful for you to go in unto your wives on the night of the fast. they are a garment for you, and you are a garment for them. Allah knows that you have been acting unjustly to yourselves, wherefore He has turned to you with mercy and afforded you relief. So you may now go in unto them and seek what Allah has ordained for you; and eat and dink until the white thread of dawn is distinguishable from the black thread of night. Then complete the fast till nightfall and do not go in unto them while you remain in the mosques for devotion. These are the limits *fixed* by Allah, so approach them not. Thus does Allah make His commandments clear to men that they may become secure against evil. (2:188)

COMMENTARY:

How beautifully in these few words the qur'an has described the rights and status of woman and the object and significance of marriage and cnojugal relations. The real object of marriage, the verse purports to say, is the comfort, protection and embellishment of the parties, for such are the uses of a garment (17:27 and 16:82). The expression *"Afa Allahu 'Anhu"* means, God corrected his mistake and set right his affairs; bestowed honor upon him. It also means, God afforded him relief Muhit). At places where days and nights are unusually long (e.g. near the poles) day and night should be calculated to be of twelve hours' duration (Muslim, Ch. *Ashrat al Sa'ah*)

Al-Hadith

عَنْ اَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُ اَنَّ رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: اِذَا جَآءَ رَمَضَانُ فُتِحَتْ اَبْوَابُ الْجَنَّةِ وَغُلِّقَتْ اَبْوَابُ النَّارِ وَصُفِّدَتِ الشَّيَاطِيْنُ ـ

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said: "When *Ramadan* arrives the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hell are locked up and Satans are put in chains."

(Bukhari kitabussaum bab hal yuqal ramadan au shahri ramadan)

عَنْ اَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: قَالَ اللّٰهُ عزَّوَجلَّ: كُلُّ عَمَلِ ابْنِ اٰدَمَ لَهٗ اِلاَّ الصِّيَامَ فَاِنَّهٗ لِيْ وَاَنَا اَجْزِيْ بِهٖ ـ وَالصِّيَامُ جُنَّةٌ فَاِذَا كَانَ يَوْمُ صَوْمِ اَحَدِكُمْ فَلاَ يَرْفُثْ وَلاَ يَصْخَبْ فَاِنْ سَابَّهٗ اَحَدٌ اَوْ قَاتَلَهٗ فَلْيَقُلْ: اِنِّيْ صَائِمٌ ـ وَالَّذِيْ نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهٖ لَخُلُوْفُ فَمِ الصَّائِمِ اَطْيَبُ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ مِنْ رِيْحِ الْمِسْكِ ـ لِلصَّائِمِ فَرْحَتَانِ يَفْرَحُهُمَا ' اِذَا اَفْطَرَ فَرِحَ ' وَاِذَا لَقِيَ رَبَّهٗ فَرِحَ بِصَوْمِهٖ ـ

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said: "Allah, the Lord of Honor and Glory says: 'All deeds of a son of Adam are for himself, but his fasting is for Me and I shall be its reward.' The fast is a shield. When any of you is fasting he should eschew loose talk and noisy exchanges. Should anyone revile him or seek to pick a quarrel with him, he should respond with: 'I am observing a fast.' By Him in Whose Hands is the life of Muhammad, the breath of one who is fasting is purer in the sight of Allah than the fragrance of musk. One who fasts experiences two joys: He is joyful when

SAYINGS OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH[AS]

Salat Purifies the Spirit and the Fast Illuminates the Heart

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِيْٓ اُنْزِلَ فِيْهِ الْقُرْاٰنُ

The month of *Ramadan* is that in which the Qur'an was sent down. (2:186)

This verse indicates the greatness of the month of *Ramadan*. The *Sufis* have recorded that this is a good month for the illumination of the heart. One who observes the fast has frequent experience of visions in this month. The *Salat* purifies the spirit and the fast illumines the heart. The purification of the spirit means that one may be delivered from the passions of the self that incites to evil; and the illumination of the heart means that the gates of Vision may be opened so that one may be able to behold God.

[Malfoozat, vol. IV, pp. 256-257]

On one occasion 1 began to reflect on the purpose of the prescribed expiation of missing a fast and 1 conceived that the expiation is prescribed so that one may be bestowed the capacity and the strength to observe the fast. God Almighty alone can bestow such strength and everything should be sought from God Almighty. He is the All-Powerful; if He so wills He can bestow the strength for observing the fast on one who is afflicted with tuberculosis. The purpose of the prescribed expiation is that one may be bestowed the strength for, the observation of the fast, and this can be achieved only through the grace of God Almighty. One should supplicate:

Lord! this is Thy blessed month and 1 am being deprived of its blessings. 1 know not whether 1 shall be alive next year, or would find the opportunity of observing the fasts that 1 am missing. Do Thou bestow upon me, by Thy grace, the strength that should enable me to observe the fast.

I am sure that one with such a heart would be bestowed the needed strength by God Almighty. If God Almighty so wished He would not have prescribed limitations for the Muslims as He had prescribed for earlier peoples, but the purpose of the limitations is the promotion of the welfare of the peop1e concerned. According to me the principle is that when a person supplicates to God Almighty with perfect sincerity that he should not be deprived of the blessings of the month of *Ramadan*, he is not so deprived, and if such a one should become ill during the month of *Rarmadan* his illness becomes a source of mercy for him, inasmuch as the value of every action is determined by the motive that inspires it It behooves a believer that he should prove himself brave in the cause of God Almighty

He who is heartily determined that he would observe the fast but is held back from doing so on account of illness while his heart yearns after the observation of the fast would not be deprived of the bounty resulting from the observation of the fast and angels would observe the fast in his place. This is a subtle matter. If a person finds the observation of the fast difficult on account of the slothfulness of his spirit and imagines that he is

not in good health, and that if he misses a meal he would suffer from various types of disorders, such a one, who imagines that a Divine blessing would sit heavy on him. He would not deserve any spiritual merit. On the other hand, a person who feels happy at the approach of the month of *Ramadan* and is eager to observe the fast, but is held back by illness from doing so, would not be deprived of the blessings of *Ramadän* Many people merely seek excuses and imagine .that as they can deceive their fellow beings they can also deceive God. Such people make their own interpretations and deem them correct, but they, are not correct in the estimation of God Almighty. The field of such interpretations is vast and a person gives in to them might become accustomed to the. performance of the *Salat* throughout his life in a sitting posture and. may abstain altogether from. observing the fast. But God is well aware of the motive and design of a person whose conduct is inspired by sincerity and devotion God Almighty knows that his heart is eager and He bestows plentifully upon him, for the eagerness of the heart is valuable in the estimation of God.

Those who seek excuses rely on their interpretations, but such interpretations have no value in the estimation of God Almighty. On one occasion when 1 continued observation of the fast for six months 1 met a company, of the Prophets in a vision .who admonished .me against imposing so much hardship on myself and directed me to desist. Thus when a person imposes hardship upon himself for the sake of God, He takes pity on him like the parents of a child and directs him to desist.

[Malfoozat, Vol. IV, pp. 258-260]

The Purpose of Fasting is Purification

I have already spoken of the *Salat.* Next in order is worship in the shape of the fast. lt is a pity that some who call themselves Muslims at this time desire to modify these forms of worship. They are blind and are not aware of the perfect wisdom of God Almighty. These forms of worship are essential for the purification of the spirit. These people seek to intervene absurdly in a sphere of which they have no knowledge and devise false schemes for the improvement of a territory that they have not visited. Their lives are devoted to worldly affairs; of spiritual matters they have no notion. To be moderate in eating and drinking and to bear. hunger and thirst are necessary for the purification of the spirit and promote the capacity for visions. Man does not live by bread alone. To discard all thought of eternal life is to invite Divine wrath

It should be remembered that the fast does not mean merely that a person should abstain from food and drink over a certain period. During the fast one should be occupied greatly with the remembrance of God The Holy Prophet[saw] occupied himself greatly with worship during the month of *Ramadan.* During that month one should discard one's preoccupation with eating and drinking; and cutting asunder from these needs should address oneself wholly towards God. Unfortunate is the person who is bestowed material bread and pays no attention to spiritual bread. Material bread strengthens the body, and spiritual bread sustains the soul and sharpens the spiritual faculties. Seek the grace of God, as all doors are opened by His grace.

****

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said: "If a person does not eschew falsehood and false conduct, Allah has no need for him to abstain from food and drink."

(Bukhari kitabussaum bab man lam yadu' qaulazzur wal'amala bih)

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said: "When *Ramadan* arrives the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hell are locked up and Satans are put in chains."

(Bukhari kitabussaum bab hal yuqal ramadan au shahri ramadan)

****

Synopsis of Friday Sermon Delivered by Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}, on August 3, 2012 at Baitul Futuh Mosque, Morden, UK

Shermeen Butt

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} recited the following verses of the Holy Qur'an at the start of his Friday sermon today:

'Verily, those who, out of fear of their Lord, always stand guard against sins. And those who believe in the Signs of their Lord, And those who ascribe not partners to their Lord, And those who give what they give while their hearts are full of fear because to their Lord they will return — These it is who hasten to do good works, and these it is who are foremost in them.' (23:58 – 62)

'Their reward is with their Lord — Gardens of Eternity, through which streams flow; they will abide therein for ever. Allah is well pleased with them, and they are well pleased with Him. That is for him who fears his Lord.' (98:9)

In last Friday sermon a discourse was given on *Ramadan* and it was explained that in order to fully benefit from *Ramadan,* reformation of word and deed was essential. It was also explained that only that fasting attains beneficence of *Ramadan* which is undertaken with *Khashiyyat* (fear and awe) of God in heart. Each piety **becomes** true piety only when it is done with *Khashiyyat* of God.

Today, matters will be expounded with reference to *Khashiyyat* of God. The word *Khashiyyat* is used commonly, but if its essence was understood, it would enhance level of virtues. The literal meaning of *Khashiyyat* is generally understood to be fear, which is correct. Fear of God takes one to virtues. However, fear of God is not like the ordinary emotion of fear. Lexicons explain this by saying that connotation of awe is more present in the word *Khashiyyat* than fear. *Khashiyyat* also connotes that awe which is borne of the greatness of a Being whereas fear connotes the weakness of one who fears.

Imam Raghib said that *Khashiyyat* is by virtue of having knowledge of something that one is in awe of. He wrote that this is why in the Qur'anic verse: '...Only those of His servants who possess knowledge fear Allah...' (35:29)

Khashiyyat has been especially associated with people of knowledge. In addition, *Imam* Raghib said that those who are in awe of the greatness of God are those about whom the Qur'an states that they: '...fear the Gracious God in secret...' (36:12).

Such fear of God necessitates knowledge and perception of Him. *Khashiyyat* is fear which is borne out of the greatness of something or a Being and acknowledgment of greatness is belief that God is the Master of all powers and He encompasses everything. One can only attain beneficence from God's power when one has full faith in His powers and has His *Khashiyyat* in heart.

The Qur'anic verse that states that only those have *Khashiyyat* who have knowledge does not mean that anyone who presumes to possess knowledge has *Khashiyyat* and anyone who is not a scholar has less *Khashiyyat*. Indeed, hundreds and thousands of 'religious scholars' of today whose words and deeds are contradictory do

not understand the Qur'an. Not only have they not accepted the Imam of the age, they stoop low in his opposition. Certainly, all this compels one to think that here the definition of 'those who possess knowledge' must be different and people who are thus addressed in the Qur'anic verse are in fact not those commonly understood to be religious scholars. There are those who go through religious seminaries and there are those who are understood by worldly people as scholars, as many a great scientist has attained unparalleled knowledge in individual fields. There are some among those worldly scholars who do not even believe in the existence of God, let alone have His *Khashiyyat.* Therefore, we have to see which people of knowledge are referred to here.

It should be clarified here that no doubt Islam is the perfect religion and those who possess religious knowledge of Islam claim that they have the knowledge. The spread of Islam is by virtue of God's decree and it will not take place through the scholars who have worldly interests at heart. Perhaps he has mentioned this before, during his recent USA trip Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih[aba] was asked by a TV interviewer about the prospects of Islam spreading in the USA. Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih[aba] replied to him that Islam will spread, not only in the USA but in the entire world. However, this will not happen through the so-called care-takers of Islam. Rather, it will come to pass through the Ahmadiyya Community by winning over hearts and by giving the message of peace and not extremism because extremism is against the teaching of the Qur'an and only the Ahmadiyya Community practices true Islam.

The Promised Messiah[as] gave us insight and perception of the Holy Qur'an and explained the reality of *Khashiyyat* of God and said that no one has a monopoly on *Khashiyyat* of God and it is not restricted. Rather, the Holy Prophet[saw] came to take every person of the world close to God and to make people Godly people. No one can become a Godly person unless he or she has *Khashiyyat* of God. Indeed, many a great robber became those with *Khashiyyat* of God after coming into the fold of Islam.

In his pronouncements the Promised Messiah[as] has narrated accounts of saints. Writing about Fozail bin Iyaz he said that once he heard someone reciting the Qur'anic verse: 'Has not the time arrived for those who believe that their hearts should feel humbled at the remembrance of Allah...' (57:17). This had an electrifying effect on Fozail. Expressing regret he said his pillaging could not carry on. He said it was time to march forward in the way of God and then, overcome with emotion, he started sobbing. He renounced his past and became an ascetic. Once he was in a desert when he came across some people who had encamped. He overheard one of them saying that this was Fozail's route of plundering. He told them to have no fear for he had repented and renounced banditry. He sought apology from all the people he had harmed. And thus people [like him] who were once bandits were renowned by the salutation of *rahamatullah alai.*

There are of course important *Jubba*/robe-clad individuals steeped in arrogance while the masses consider them pious; they do not have *Khashiyyat.* Those who are haughty towards people do not have *Khashiyyat.* What is *Khashiyyat* and who possesses *Khashiyyat*? We are most fortunate that by accepting the Promised Messiah[as] we have come to know the true definition of *Khashiyyat.*

The Promised Messiah[as] said: 'People who fear Allah the Exalted are those who have perfect knowledge of His greatness, power, favors and beauty. By virtue of their connotation, *Khashiyyat* and Islam are in fact one and the same thing because the meaning of perfect *Khashiyyat* is bound by the meaning of Islam.'

It is essential for each believer to attain this, then alone can one progress in faith and connection with God. By calling Islam and *Khashiyyat* one and the same thing every Muslim has been given the position of one who possesses knowledge.

The Promised Messiah[as] said: 'It is more or less the nature of man that he attains guidance after having perfect knowledge of Allah the Exalted. As Allah the Exalted states: '...Only those of His servants who possess knowledge fear Allah...'. Indeed, those of satanic disposition are outside this principle.'

The Promised Messiah[as] also said: 'Knowledge does not signify logic or philosophy, rather true knowledge is that which Allah the Exalted grants merely through His grace. Such knowledge is a source of

having awareness of Allah the Exalted and it generates Divine *Khashiyyat,* as stated in the Holy Qur'an: '... Only those of His servants who possess knowledge fear Allah... If knowledge does not bring about progression in *Khashiyyat* of Allah the Exalted, then remember such knowledge is not a source of progression in Divine knowledge.'

There are those whose tongues do not utter anything but abuse. Could the religious scholars whose abusive words about the Promised Messiah[as] and also our *Jama'at,* in Pakistan and also here [in Britain] during Friday sermons have *Khashiyyat*?

The Promised Messiah[as] said: 'Remember, it is always the foolish who slips. When Satan slipped, it was not due to knowledge but due to foolishness. If he had excellence of knowledge, he would not have slipped. The Qur'an does not condemn knowledge, rather it states: '...Only those of His servants who possess knowledge fear Allah...'. Half-learned *Mullah* is renowned as danger to faith.'

The Promised Messiah[as] also said: 'Godly scholar does not signify one who is only matchless in syntax or logic, rather Godly scholar is that person who is always in fear of Allah the Exalted and whose tongue does not utter absurdities. However, in the current age even those who bathe the deceased have started calling themselves scholars and have made themselves inclusive in this term. This way the word is greatly demeaned and its meaning and connotation has been taken against the will and objective of Allah the Exalted. Whereas the Holy Qur'an has stated this as a quality of the learned: '...Only those of His servants who possess knowledge fear Allah...'. That is, only those are scholars who fear Allah the Exalted. It will now be essential to observe that those who do not have the qualities of *Khashiyyat* and *Taqwa* of Allah, are certainly not worthy of being called by this title.

Knowledge is something that is certain and absolute and true knowledge is found in the Holy Qur'an and not in Greek philosophy or in the current British philosophy. Rather, true knowledge is found in philosophy of faith. The excellence and zenith of a believer is in attaining the status of a scholar and in achieving the state of certainty of knowledge which is the pinnacle of knowledge. However, those who are not blessed with true knowledge and on whom the paths of Divine knowledge and insight are not opened, may have themselves known as scholars but they are completely deprived of the merits and qualities of knowledge. The do not have the light that is found from true knowledge. In fact such people are entirely in loss and deficit. They fill their Hereafter with smog and darkness... those who are given true knowledge and insight of God and are given that knowledge which results in *Khashiyyat* of God, are those who have been likened to the Israelite Prophets in *Hadith.*',Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih[aba] said that the *Hadith* which relates that a time will come when Muslim religious scholars will be the worst of creation under the heavens and all evil will come from them and will return to them proves that everyone who is known as a scholar does not have *Khashiyyat* of God.

The Promised Messiah[as] said: '*Taqwa* and fear of God is borne out of knowledge, as Allah the Exalted states: '...Only those of His servants who possess knowledge fear Allah...'that is, only those fear Allah the Exalted who have knowledge. This clearly shows that true knowledge generates *Khashiyyat* of Allah and Allah the Exalted has associated *Taqwa* with knowledge. A person who is a scholar in the real sense will definitely have *Khashiyyat* of Allah. By knowledge, I mean knowledge of the Qur'an and not philosophy, science or current erudition because in order to attain them *Taqwa* and piety are not conditional. Just as a sinful, wicked person can learn them, so can a religious person. However, knowledge of the Qur'an is not given to anyone apart from the righteous and the religious. Thus, here knowledge signifies knowledge of the Qur'an which generates *Taqwa* and *Khashiyyat* of Allah.'

The Promised Messiah[as] said: 'One should not be deceived by the word 'scholar'/those who possess knowledge. A scholar is one who fears Allah the Exalted. '...Only those of His servants who possess knowledge fear Allah...', that is, no doubt those from among His servants who fear Allah the Exalted are the ones who possess knowledge. Their servitude and *Khashiyyat* of Allah is so heightened that they directly acquire knowledge and awareness from Allah the Exalted and gain beneficence from it. This status and rank is

found through complete obedience and utmost love of the Holy Prophet[saw], so much so that a person is completely imbued in his color.'

Thus is the reality of people who possess knowledge and their *Khashiyyat* of God. These extracts also draw attention to inculcating *Khashiyyat* of God so that one can be a true believer. This is not exclusive to any section of society and is a commandment for every Muslim. During this *Ramadan* full benefit should be availed of the doors of Divine nearness that have been opened and the ambience of spiritual development is prevalent with *Dars* taking place. The Qur'an should be read with understanding to search for the ways of Divine knowledge that lead to *Khashiyyat* of God. The verses recited at the start of the sermon speak of true believers who fear their Lord and who believe in His Signs. Signs of God signify all His commandments, all Qur'anic verses following which is essential. Perfect faith is by virtue of practice and is a source of inculcating *Khashiyyat* of God. One who has *Khashiyyat* of God does not ascribe partners to Him. However, sometimes hidden *shirk* (ascribing partners to God) is committed and this is why meticulousness is required. One should keep one's word and deed firm on truth at all times. The fourth quality mentioned in the verses is that these people serve religion by giving their time and money, yet their hearts are fearful lest their giving is accepted or not and lest they slip at any point.

A *Hadith* related by Hadhrat 'Ayesha[ra] recounts that she once asked the Holy Prophet[saw] that does the verse 'And those who give what they give while their hearts are full of fear because to their Lord they will return' mean that one could do what one liked but fear God. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) replied that no, it meant that one should practice piety and also fear God.

God is Independent of all, He accepts what He wishes and does not accept what He wishes, one should always be in fear and awe of Him. Hadhrat Umme Salma[ra] related a prayer of the Holy Prophet[saw]: 'O Changer of hearts, keep my heart firm on Your religion.' When Hadhrat Umme Salma[ra] asked the Holy Prophet[saw] the reason for the regularity with which he said this prayer, he answered: 'O Umme Salma, the heart of every person lies between two fingers of God. He keeps steadfast whomsoever He wishes and He turns awry whomsoever He wishes.' If this was the level of prayer of the Holy Prophet[saw] who was the guide, by following whose blessed model one achieves *Taqwa* and *Khashiyyat* of God, how tremendous is the need for us to draw our attention to this. A favor among the favours of the Holy Prophet[saw] is that he taught us ways of praying. Following is one of his prayer which all of us should say: 'O Allah, I seek Your refuge from a heart that is not humble, from a prayer that is not accepted, from a *nafs* (self) that is not satiated and from knowledge that is not beneficial. I seek refuge from You from these four.'

A prayer of the Holy Prophet[saw] which touches the lofty heights of humility and *Khashiyyat* of God is the one he made during his Farewell Hajj. He prayed: 'O Allah, You listen to what I say and You see my condition. You are fully aware of my secret matters and my apparent affairs, nothing about me is hidden from You. I am a beggar and needy in plight, seeker of Your help and refuge, afraid and frightened. I have come to You, acknowledging and confessing my sins. I beg You like a humble and meek person and entreat You like a lowly, sinful person. I pray to You like a scared blind person, my neck is bowed before You and my tears are flowing in Your Presence. My body is lying prostrate before You and my nose is covered in dust. O Allah, do not make me wretched while praying to You. Treat me with kindness and mercy. O' You Who listens to entreaties the most, and grants the very best, accept my prayer.'

This was the great Prophet who gave us a great model of *Khashiyyat* of God. Each prayer of his, each practice of his was replete with *Khashiyyat* of God although he was the closest to God and even those who were associated with him earned the salutation of '*Razi Allah*' (may Allah be pleased with him/her). Such was his blessed, exemplary model and such was his *Khashiyyat* of God. If we adopt it, we too can attain God's grace. May God enable us to understand the spirit and essence of *Khashiyyat* during *Ramadan* and may this *Ramadan* bring about a spiritual revolution.

OBLIGATION, MAGNIFICENCE, OBJECTIVES AND BENEFITS OF FASTING AND SOME RELATED ISSUES

Ramadan is the month of supplications, patience, and mutual sympathy in which the provisions of the *Momin* are increased

Tahir Mahmood Ahmad

Translated by: Arifa Haleem

The blessed month of *Ramadan* is just like a guest that comes once in a year and brings with it spiritual and physical blessings. On its arrival, the entire atmosphere looks like the spring season. Divine light prevails and general good is distributed abundantly. The souls wake up and quickly reach the heights of advancement .Love and divine light glitter in the mind and soul. The passions become polished and refined, the field of *Taqwa* is watered and the gates of the acceptance of prayers are opened. The continuous process of divine inspiration, revelation and true dreams is established. The spiritual life becomes fully engaged .The feelings arise and sensitivity to the hard times of the poor and destitute brothers increases. Unusual increase in *Sadaqa* and alms takes place. The wave of mutual sympathy, true sacrifice and sincerity envelopes the whole society.

Reason for Naming it *Ramadan*

Regarding the reason for naming this month as *Ramadan* and its philosophy, the Promised Messiah[as] says:

"The scorching heat of the sun is called "*ramadh*," and because in *Ramadan*, man abstains from eating, drinking and all the physical pleasures and secondly he generates warmth and excitement for obeying the commands of God Almighty, so *Ramadan* is the combination of spiritual fervor and physical heat. The people who are well versed in the language, say that because it occurred in the warm season it was called *Ramadan*. From my point of view this is not correct because it cannot be the peculiarity of Arabia. The meaning of spiritual *Ramadan* is to provide spiritual eagerness and warmth. *Ramadan* is also called that heat by which stones and other things like them become hot .It is the month of prayer and from this verse the magnificence of this month is

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِيْٓ اُنْزِلَ فِيْهِ الْقُرْاٰنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَ بَيِّنٰتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدٰى وَالْفُرْقَانِ ۚ فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ ۖ وَمَنْ كَانَ مَرِيْضًا اَوْ عَلٰى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ اَيَّامٍ اُخَرَ ۗ يُرِيْدُ اللّٰهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيْدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ ز وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللّٰهَ عَلٰى مَا هَدٰىكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ۝

reflected. The Sufis have considered this month good for the enlightenment of hearts and in this month divine inspirations happen abundantly.

(Fatawah Ahmadiyya p.175)

Fasting in the Mirror of History.

By studying the history of religions it is known that fasting was prescribed obligatory in all the religions but there is difference in the commands of fasting, its restrictions and numbers. Even today the custom of fasting still exists in different religions. The fasts have been prescribed obligatory in *Deen* only on the basis of their benefits and attributes so that the *Ummah* could also be able to create contentment and peace in their society and environment and perform the duty to Allah and His men in the way as it should be.

The Jews observe fasting by following Moses and by doing so they make extraordinary arrangements. So in the Bible it is written about Moses[as] that he fasted for forty days in Mount Sinai:

"So for forty days and nights he stayed with the Lord and he did neither eat bread nor drink water."

(Kharooj)

Then Samuel said, "Gather all Israel to Mizpeh and I will pray for you to the Lord. And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water and poured it before the Lord and fasted on that day.

(Samuel No. 1: 6, 7)

Jesus also used to fast and by following Him even today some Christians also fast. It is written in the Bible:

"At that time Jesus full of the Holy Spirit was led to the wilderness, so that his endurance from the temptations of *Iblis* should be tested and so after eating nothing for forty days , he was famished " (*Matthew* 4:2,3) (here eating nothing means fasting)

Once the students of Jesus asked Him, "How can we expel the impure spirits? He answered:

"This thing (impure spirit) cannot be expelled without prayer and fasting."

(Matthew 17:12)

The Jews adopted some schisms and formalities in fasting in which hypocrisy reflected. So Jesus told His disciples and followers the right method of fasting and said, "When you fast, do not put on somber faces like the hypocrites ; for they disfigure their faces , so that when fasting they may be noticed by men .Truly, I say to you ,they have their full reward ,but when you fast, anoint your head ,and wash your face so that your fasting will not be noticed by men ,but by your Father who is in secret ; and your Father who in secret sees your actions ,shall reward you openly."

(Matthew Chapter 2)

Even among ancient Egyptians fasting was in vogue. Though the ancient Egyptian religion was idol worshipping, yet the followers of this religion used to observe fast to please their idols and to calm down their wrath and fury and for all this they used to inflict themselves with different kinds of physical tortures. Even the Greeks had the custom of fasting, especially the Greek women used to make particular arrangements for fasting. In Hinduism it is custom to have *Bart* i.e. to fast every month. *Chillah Kashi* is a well -known custom among religious leaders of Hinduism but there is a difference about the number of fasts, their commands and the fasting times among all the given religions. In the pre-Islamic Era, before the Apostleship of the Holy Prophet [saw] even the non-believing Arabians always fasted on *Ashura* day (tenth of Muharram) because on this day *Khana Ka'bah* used to be draped with a new covering .

(Al Bukhari Kitab ul Saum)

Prescribed Fasting

Fasting is the fourth pillar of Islam. By going through the history of Islam, it is known that when due to intolerable tyranny, the Holy Prophet[saw] migrated from Makkah to Medina then in the second year of this historical migration, fasting in the month of *Sha'baan* was prescribed for every adult but with the condition that one should not be traveling or ailing. The following verse about the prescribed fasting has been revealed in the Holy Qur'an,

"O, ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may become righteous. The prescribed fasting is for a fixed number of days, but who so among you is sick or is on journey shall fast the same number of other days; and for those who are able to fast only with great difficulty is an expiation –--the feeding of a poor man . And who so performs a good work with willing obedience, it is better for him and fasting is good for you, if you only knew. The month of *Ramadan* is that in which the Holy Qur'an was sent down as guidance for mankind with clear proofs of guidance and discrimination. Therefore who so ever of you is present at home in this month, let him fast therein, but who so is sick or is on a journey shall fast the same number of other days. Allah desires to give you facility and He desires not hardship for you, and that you may complete the number and that you may Exalt Allah for His having guided you and that you may be grateful"

(Al-Baqarah: 184-186)

Superiority and Magnificence of *Ramadaul Mubarak*

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] narrates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said, "When the month of Ramadan comes then the gates of Paradise are opened."

The other tradition is, "The gates of Heaven are opened and the doors of Hell are closed, the devils are chained."

It is narrated in another Tradition, "that the gates of blessings are opened." (*Mishkat ul Masabih*)

It is narrated by Hardhat Salman Farsi[ra] that on the last day of *Sha'baan* the Holy Prophet[saw] delivered a sermon and said,

"O, People! the magnificent month is going to start tomorrow and that is a blessed month. In this month there is such a night which is better than a thousand nights. God Almighty has prescribed for you obligatory fasting in this month and in its nights *Tahajjud* Prayer has been declared a special supererogatory prayer .The person who in this month does some optional good for the sake of getting closeness to God, he will be blessed as if he has done his duty in the other months and the person who does his obligatory duty in this month, he will be considered as if he has done his duty for seventy years. This is a month of patience and the reward of patience is Paradise. This is such a month of mutual sympathy in which the provisions of the pious believers are increased and a person who feeds any fasting person, his sins are forgiven and his neck becomes free from the Hell fire. He is blessed with the reward just like the reward of a fasting person and there is no decrease in the reward of a fasting person .The narrator says that we asked, "The Messenger of God! Every person is not blessed with the ability to feed the fasting person." The Holy Prophet[saw] said, "God Almighty grants this *Thawab* (reward) to every person who breaks the fast of the fasting person with a sip of milk or a date. One who feeds the fasting person fully, God Almighty will make him drink from His *Hauze Kauthar* (A fountain or reservoir or river in Paradise) in such a way that he will not be thirsty till his entrance in the Heaven. The Holy Prophet[saw] said, this is such a month of which the first part is blessing, the middle forgiveness and the last part is freedom from Hell fire. A person who in this month will minimize the work of his slave or servant, God Almighty will grant him forgiveness, and give him freedom from Hell Fire."

(Mishkat ul Masabih)

Purpose and Objective of Fasting

In the Holy Qur'an, God Almighty has described three purposes of fasting.

1. لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ

So that by fearing God you protect yourself from the individual and collective weaknesses. *Taqwah* by fasting can be obtained like this ,when fear of God develops in a man's heart then he starts hating evil doings ,and becomes inclined towards good deeds because a *Muttaqi* (God fearing) is that person who lives his life according to the pleasure of God and His Messenger.

2. وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللّٰهَ

So express the Magnificence of God according to His guidance. The other purpose of fasting is to accept His Greatness i.e. even the thought of worshipping other than God should not come in mind. And by accepting the Real Unity by words and heart, one should devote oneself for the Exaltation of God Almighty. That is why when fasting in the month of *Ramadan* comes to an end, it is instructed to extol *Takbir* abundantly in the prayer in the *Eidul Fitr* ceremony

3. لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ

So that you should thank Him. The third purpose of fasting is to express gratitude. In the Arabic language, the meaning of gratitude is to respect and give one his full rights. The true thanks to God Almighty is that all the given body parts of man i.e. brain, heart, tongue, eye, ears, hands and feet should work according to the commands of God Almighty, and these organs should be used properly, then a man can say that I am thankful to God.

Medical Benefits of Fasting

Fasting is a matchless example of being a source of eliminating or regulating waste toxic materials from the heart and soul. The well-known physician of the East, *Allama* Quraishi at one place by explaining the usefulness of fasting says, if the excrement remains inside the body, then due to its quantity and condition it becomes a source of different diseases. So its expulsion is necessary. If the waste material i.e. feces is expelled with the help of medicines then mostly due to the side effects of the medicines good substance is also expelled along with the waste material .That is why one feels weakness after a purgative and so far as the body heat of the fasting person is concerned , sometimes it becomes so intense that it helps to burn and eliminate the waste material .If the waste materials are dissolved then different kinds of bacteria are up rooted or the man becomes the image of

لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ

i.e. he becomes *Muttaqi* (God fearing) and pious in a true sense.

Recommendation for a Fasting Person

It is narrated by Hadhrat Abdullah Bin Umru[ra] that the Holy

Prophet [saw] said, the recommendation of the Fast and the Holy Qur'an about a *Momin* will be accepted. The Fast will say, O, my God! accept my recommendation because I have stopped this *Momin* in the day time from eating food and indulging in lusts. The Holy Qur'an will say, accept my recommendation because I have stopped him from sleeping at night. So the recommendation of both will be accepted.

(Al-Baihaqi)

Reward and *Thawab* of the Fasts

It is the tradition of Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] that the Holy Prophet[saw] said, the reward of every action of Adam's son has been enhanced from ten times to seven hundred times but God Almighty said, "Fasting is only for My sake and I will give its reward My Self. (i.e. There is no limit of His Reward and it is unlimited.) The fasting person abstains from eating and drinking only for My sake and he has got two happy occasions, one is at the time of breaking fast and the other one is at the time of meeting his God. The fragrance from the mouth of a fasting person is far better than the fragrance of pure musk."

(Sunan Ibne Majah, Bab Ma Ja Fi Fazl us Siyam)

Three Collective Blessings of *Ramadanul Mubarak*

Along with fasting the *Sharia* has declared it necessary that a fasting person should spend the maximum time in reciting the Holy Qur'an, *Nawafil* (optional prayer), remembering God and praying. He should abstain from all kinds of vain talks and acts. Besides individual blessings, *Deen* has also collectively specified some blessings with *Ramadan,* which are in the following:-

Tahajjud Prayer and *Taraweeh*

The Holy Qur'an has made *Tahajjud* Prayer obligatory for the Holy Prophet[saw]. The Companions also followed the footsteps of the Holy Prophet[saw] and offered *Tahajjud* Prayer. This Prayer is besides the five obligatory prayers which can be offered from sleeping time to awakening time before sun rise .This individual prayer is the prayer of privacy and seclusion in which a man supplicates to God.

The Holy Prophet[saw] throughout his life offered supererogatory *Tahajjud* Prayer by standing, kneeling and prostrating for so long hours that his feet used to get swollen. The traditions prove that the Holy Prophet[saw] besides three *Witr* always offered eight *Rak'at Nawafil* as a *Tahajjud* prayer and at the end offered *Witr*. He used to offer these *Nawafil* as two *Rakats* followed by two *Rakats* and so on. It is stated in the traditions that he offered these eight *Nawafil* not only in *Ramadan* but in other days also.

Ramadan is the month of the Qur'an .It is necessary to recite the Holy Qur'an abundantly. In this month even Hadhrat Gabriel[as] used to recite and revise the Holy Qur'an along with the Holy Prophet.[saw] The Holy Prophet[saw] used to recite the Holy Qur'an in congregation in the month of *Ramadan* and created the situation to listen it like this, that he went out and prayed in the mosque and the people followed his *Nawafil* prayer .He led them only for a number of nights but it was a very exhilarating view and the people wished that this system should be continued in the same way but the Holy Prophet[saw] abandoned to lead them in congregational form lest that be made obligatory for them. At the *Tahajjud* time, the people individually at their own places used to recite Holy Qur'an in *Nawafil*. Some people offered *Nawafil* after *Isha* prayer also.

In the Farooqi Era this system was organized, so that whole Qur'an in the month of *Ramadan* should be recited behind one *Imam*. These *Nawafil* were called *Taraweeh* and keeping in view the comfort of the people these *Nawafil* were being offered after the *Isha* Prayer and now fourteen centuries have passed, this system is continuously working in all the countries of the world. What a magnificent blessing is this that now the recitation of the whole Quran is heard all over the world through the *Qaries* (reciters of the Holy Qur'an in melodious voice) and memorizers. This blessed method is also a matchless source for the safety of the Holy Qur'an. Every night of *Ramadan* it has been observed in all the mosques that if the *Imam* forgets even a single word, then the corrections are immediately made by the followers of the prayer .In this way hundreds of the memorizers are being produced. So this method is a congregational blessing. In the last part of night at the *Suhoor* time *Tahajjud* Prayer at its own place is a method of regular supplications .In *Ramadanul Mubarak* the fasting people get the best opportunity to make its arrangements.

I'tikaf

The whole month of *Ramadan* is the month of spiritual struggle, but

the last *Ashra* (ten days) has got tremendous importance because these are the days of ripening the spiritual fruit. Especially in these days the Holy Prophet[saw] used to gird up his loins and also used to advise his family to get the full share from this spiritual rain. The Holy Qur'an has mentioned about *I'tikaf* in the last *Ashra* of *Ramadan* and has also explained commands for it. The *I'tikaf* performing person confines himself for the last ten days of *Ramadan* in a corner of the mosque and eagerly accepts more restrictions than the fasting person. Day and night with all his devotion he sits at the door of his Beloved and tries to get His closeness by humbleness, lamentation, and specific way of love.

I'itikaf is the *Sunnah-e-Nabavi*[saw] and it is a great blessing for that person who can follow this *Sunnah*. These secluded performers they become habitual to pray all the time for the prevalence of True *Deen*, the *Imam* of the community, the welfare of the members of the community and the prosperity and success of those who are serving for *Deen*. From this point of view it is also a collective blessing of *Ramadan*.

Lailatul Qadr

God Almighty has declared *Lailatul Qadr* as the best night .The meaning of *Lailatul Qadr* is the Night of Decree/Power and it also means the period of "*Mamoor*" (era of a reformer or learned men). The Sufis have considered the moment of every person's genuine and granted repentance as *Lailatul Qadr*. It is narrated in the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw]; this night is any one from the odd nights of the last ten days of *Ramadan*. This is a night of brightness and favours. The doors of the *Darbar-e-Aam* of the blessings of God Almighty are opened. There are specific moments of the acceptance of prayer and all this process goes on till

مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ

and the praying people enjoy the special flavor. The heart of a man fills with divine light and he transforms. His firm and lasting relationship establishes with the Holy Being and he becomes an enlightened being and achieves the nearness of the Heavenly Spirit (that gives the spiritual luster to the hearts and souls of the believers) and it seems as if he has got the purpose of life. That is why this night is counted as the better night than his whole life.

اَلْفِ شَهْرٍ

This *Lailatul Qadr* is the night of goodness and blessings .The angels and Gabriel descend and all around there are showers of divine light. The blessings of this month produce the same condition in the hearts of the Believers which in the spring season is produced due to proper rain on the fertile lands. On this night decisions of the rise and fall of the nations are settled in the Heavens and they are applied on the earth at the acquired time. In short *Lailatul Qadr* is the most blessed night of the month of Ramadan.

Issues related to Fasting

Fasting by Visual Sighting of the Moon

It is narrated by Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] that the Holy Prophet[saw] said, do not start fasting unless you see the new moon of *Ramadan* and do not end fasting by considering it the end of *Ramadan* until you see the new moon. If the weather is cloudy, then calculate it when it should appear i.e., by completing the thirty days consider it the beginning of the new month. *(Muslim)*

Listening to *Adhan* While Observing *Suhoor*

It is narrated by Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] that the Holy Prophet[saw] said that at the last hours of *Sehri* if any one of you hears the call to Prayer and the vessel of food or drink is still in his hand, let him not put it down until he is finished with it. *(Abu Daud)*

Miswak in Fasting

It is narrated by Hadrat Amer[ra] that I have seen the Holy Prophet[saw] many times using *miswak* (the twig of a certain tree for cleaning the teeth) in fasting condition. *Al-Tirmidhi)*

Forgetfully Eating in the Fast

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] narrated that the Holy Prophet[saw] said, a person who eats or drinks in forgetfulness, he should complete his fasting. His fasting is not broken .God Almighty has made him eat and drink. *(Bukhari, Muslim)*

A Liar's Fasting is not accepted

It is narrated by Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] that the Holy Prophet[saw] said, "A person who does not give up uttering falsehood and acting according to it then God Almighty has no need that such a person in the name of fast should abstain from food and drink." *(Al-Bukhari)*

To Pour Water on the Head Due to Heat or Thirst

A Companion of the Holy

Prophet[saw] narrates; "at the place of Arj I have seen the Holy Prophet[saw] pouring water over his head while fasting due to heat or thirst." *(Al-Baihaqi)*

Fasting While on Journey

It was asked from the Promised Messiah[as], "what is the command about fasting while on a journey?"

The Promised Messiah[as] said, "This is known from the Holy Qur'an that the patient and traveler should not observe fast. It is the command of God Almighty because He did not say that one who is unable to fast, he should fast. I think that a traveler should not fast but generally most of the people observe fasting so, if any one observes it hesitantly, then it does not matter but even then

فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ اَيَّامٍ اُخَرَ

should be kept in mind. A man who observes fast by bearing many hardships of the journey then it means he wants to please God by his physical strength and not by obeying His positive commands. This is a mistake because the true belief lies in the obedience of positive and negative commands of God Almighty. "

(Majmua Fatawa Ahmadiyya vol.1, p. 189)

Intention of Fasting

A person asked a question, "I was sitting in a room and I was sure that there is still time for fasting and by eating something I intended for fasting but afterwards I came to know from another person that the whiteness of dawn had appeared in the sky, so what should I do now? The Promised Messiah[as] replied, "In this condition your fast is not broken and there is no need to observe it again, because you yourself were careful about it and your intention was not different."

(Majmua Fatawa Ahmad vol.1 ,183)

Fasting Person's Looking in a Mirror

A person asked a question to the Promised Messiah[as], "Is it permissible or not for a fasting person to look in the mirror? He answered, "It is permissible."

(Majmua Fatawah Ahmad)

Applying Oil During Fasting

One of the persons asked, "Is it permissible to apply oil on the head or beard during fasting?" He answered, "It is permissible."

(Majmua Fatawah Ahmad Vol. 1 P. 183)

Fasting of a Sick Person

One of the persons asked the question, "If an eye of the fasting person is infected then is it permissible or not to apply medicine in the eye?"

He answered, "This is a wrong question, "fasting is not commanded for the sick person."

{Majmua Fatawah Ahmadiyya Vol.1 st p. 183)

Feeding the Poor

The same person asked the question, "The person who is unable to fast should feed a poor person in expiation but is this permissible or not to send this expiation amount for feeding the poor to the Orphan Fund Qadian?" The Promised Messiah[as] said, "It is the same thing whether someone feeds a poor in one's own city or sends it to the Orphan Fund Qadian." *(Majmua Fatawa Ahmad Vol.1 p. 183)*

To Apply Antimony while Fasting

A question was asked, "should a fasting person apply antimony to the eyes or not?"

It was answered, "It is abominable, but what is the need to apply it at day time. It can be done at night".

(Majmua Fatawa Ahmad Vol.1 P.184)

Those Unable to Fast

A person asked, "Sometimes the month of *Ramadan* falls in such a season when the farmers are extremely busy and they have a lot of work to do like sowing the seeds and irrigation and there are the workers whose livelihood depends only on daily wages, and they cannot observe fast so, what are the instructions about them?"

The Promised Messiah[as] said, "Everyone should think about his state of *Taqwa* and piety and it is better if anyone can employ a laborer in his place, otherwise it is a command for the sick person to observe fast when it is easy for him

عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ يُطِيْقُوْنَهٗ

and about this he said, "Its meaning is, those who have not got the strength."

(Majmua Fatawa Ahmad Vol. 1 p.184.)

In the end we pray that may God the Exalted grant us His favor to get the spiritual and physical blessings and may He make us enter in the category of His loved ones. *Ameen*

(Daily Al-Fazl, August 5, 2011)

THE HOLY QUR'AN

Translated from Hadiqatus Salihin by: Karimullah Zirvi

Hadhrat 'Uthman bin 'Affan[ra] relates that the Messenger[sa] of Allah said: "The best of you is he who learns the Qur'an and teaches it."

(Bukhari kitab fada'ilul Qur'an bab khairukum man ta'alamal Qur'an)

Hadhrat Rafi' bin Mu'alla-[ra] relates: The Messenger[saw] of Allah said to me: "Shall I tell you before you go out of the mosque which is the greatest chapter of the Qur'an? Then he took hold of my hand. When we were about to come out from the mosque I said to him: 'O Messenger[sa] of Allah! You had said that you would tell me which is the greatest Chapter of the Qur'a-n.' He answered: 'It is, *Alhamdu lillahi rabbil 'alamin'* (All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the worlds), the opening chapter which contains the seven oft-repeated verses and the Great Qur'an which has been bestowed upon me.' "

(Bukhari kitab fada'ilul Qur'an bab fadl fatihatul kitab)

Hadhrat Bashir bin 'Abdul Mundhir[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said: "He who does not recite the Qur'an melodiously is not one of us ."

(Abu Dawud kitabussalat bab kaifa yastahbuttartil fil qira')

Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ud[ra] relates: The Holy Prophet[saw] asked me to recite the Qur'an to him. I said: "O Messenger[saw] of Allah! Shall I recite the Qur'an to you, whereas, it has been revealed on you? He[saw] said: 'I like to hear its recitation from someone other than myself.' So I recited to him a portion from *Surah Al-Nisa'* till I came to the verse:

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيدٍ وَّ جِئْنَا
بِكَ عَلَى هَؤُلَاءِ شَهِيدًا ۝

And how *will it fare with them* when We shall bring a witness from every people, and shall bring you as a witness against these! (4:42)'

He[saw] interrupted saying: 'That is enough for now.' " I looked at him and saw that his eyes were running.

(Bukhari bab husnassaut bilqira' Muslim)

Hadhrat Anas[ra] relates that the Messenger[saw] of Allah said: "The example of a believer who recites the Holy Qur'an is like the tangerine, which has a pleasant smell and its taste is good; the example of a believer who does not recite the Holy Qur'an is like the date, which tastes good but has no smell. The example of the sinner who recites the Holy Qur'an is like the sweet basil flower (*Ocimum pelosum*) which smells pleasant but is bitter in taste; the example of the sinner who does not recite the Holy Qur'an is like the wild gourd, which does not smell good and also has a bitter taste."

(Abu Dawud kitabul adab bab man yu'mar añyyujalis)

Hadhrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said, "The one who recites the whole Holy Qur'an in less than three days does not understand anything in the Holy Qur'an."

(Tirmidhi abwabul qira')

Hadhrat Ibn 'Abbas[ra] relates that the Messenger[saw] of Allah said: "He in whose heart there is nothing of the Qur'an is like a house in ruin."

(Tirmidhi fada'ilul Qur'an bab man qira harfan)

ZAKAT

Hadhrat Haasan[ra] relates that the Messenger[saw] of Allah said: "Fortify your property by paying *Zakat*, cure the sick by giving charity, and defend yourself against the vicissitudes of misfortune through invocations and humble entreaties."

(Murasil Abu Dawud bab fissa'im yusibu ahlihi)

Hadhrat'Amr bin Shu'aib[ra] relates that his grandfather told him that a woman with her daughter came to see the Holy Prophet[saw]. Her daughter was wearing heavy gold bangles. He[saw] asked her, 'Do you give *Zakat* on these (bangles)? She replied, 'No.' He[sa] said: "Would you like that Allah makes you wear in place of them bangles of fire on the Day of Judgment? The narrator says: 'She removed both of them and presented them to the Holy Prophet[saw] and said: 'Both these are for Allah, the most Honoured and Glorious, and His Messenger[sa].' "

(Abu Dawud kitabuzzakat babalkanz ma huwa wa zakatal hali)

Hadhrat Abu Umamah Bahli[ra] relates that Tha'labah bin Hatib Al-Ansari came to the Messenger[sa] of Allah and said: "O Messenger[saw] of Allah! Supplicate to Allah that He gives me a lot of wealth. The Messenger[saw] of Allah said: 'O Tha'labah! Woe to you. It is easier to be thankful for less wealth than for a lot of wealth for which you are unable to be thankful.' After sometime, he again came to him[saw] and said, 'O Messenger[saw] of Allah! supplicate to Allah that He gives me a lot of wealth.' He[saw] said: 'Would not you have a good model in me? By Him in whose hand is my life! Were I to tell mountains to become gold or silver for me, they would turn into that.' After sometime, he again came to him[saw] and said, 'O Messenger[saw] of Allah! supplicate to Allah that He gives me a lot of wealth. By Allah, Who has commissioned you with the Truth! If Allah grants me wealth I will certainly discharge everyone's rights.' The Messenger[saw] of Allah prayed saying: 'O Allah! Make Tha'labah wealthy. O Allah! Grant Tha'labah wealth.'

The narrator says: He (Tha'labah) bought a few goats. The goats multiplied as rapidly as insects multiply. At that time, he (Tha'labah) used to offer *Zuhr* and *'Asr* Prayers with the Messenger[saw] of Allah and offered the rest of the Prayers with his flock of goats. However, when his flock of goats increased he also became lazy and started to come for Friday Prayer only. When his flock of goats further increased in number he stopped coming even for Friday Prayer and congregations. On Fridays, the Messenger[saw] of Allah, used to go out and inquire about the condition of people. On one Friday the Messenger[sa] of Allah asked: 'How is Tha'labah doing?' People said: 'O' Messenger[saw] of Allah! Tha'labah has bought goats and the flock of his goats has grown so big that it cannot be accommodated in the valley.' Hearing this, the Messenger[saw] of Allah said: 'Woe on you O' Tha'labah, Woe on you O' Tha'labah, Woe on you O' Tha'labah.'

When the verses regarding charity were revealed, the Messenger[saw] of Allah appointed two men, one from Banu Sulaim and one from Banu Juhainah, and dictated to them the thresholds regarding the ages of the animals for taking *Zakat*. He[saw] directed them to pass by Tha'labah bin Hatib and another man who belonged to Banu Sulaim tribe to collect *Zakat* from them. Both (collectors) went to Tha'labah and asked him to pay *Zakat*. They also read the letter of the Messenger[saw] of Allah to him. He said: 'What you are collecting is a poll-tax or the like of poll-tax. Anyway, go forth and return to me after you have completed the collections.' Both of them went forward. Salami heard about the collectors' visit, and selected the best of his camels for charity and separated them. He welcomed the collectors along with them (camels). When they saw the animals, they told him these (precious animals) are not obligatory on you. He replied, 'Take these because I am giving them with pleasure and satisfaction. They visited other people and collected *Zakat* from them, then they returned to Tha'labah. He said show me your letter. He read it and said: 'This is a poll-tax or the like of poll-tax. You both go away until I make up my opinion.' So both (collectors) went back and when the Messenger[saw] of Allahsaw them, while they had not said anything yet, he uttered aloud: 'Woe on Tha'labah.' Then he prayed for the welfare of Salami. And they informed him (the Messenger[saw] of Allah) how Tha'labah had behaved. Allah the Most Honored and Glorious at that time revealed the following verses:

وَ مِنْهُمْ مَّنْ عٰهَدَ اللّٰهَ لَئِنْ اٰتٰنَا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ
لَنَصَّدَّقَنَّ وَ لَنَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ۝ فَلَمَّآ
اٰتٰهُمْ مِّنْ فَضْلِهٖ بَخِلُوْا بِهٖ وَ تَوَلَّوْا وَّ هُمْ
مُّعْرِضُوْنَ ۝

And among them there are those who made a covenant with Allah, *saying*, "If He gives us of His bounty, we would most surely give alms and be of the virtuous." But when He gave them of His bounty, they became niggardly of it, and they turned away in aversion. (9:75-76)

After listening to all the conversation, a relative of Tha'labah, who was sitting in the company of the Messenger[saw] of Allah, went to Tha'labah and said, 'Pity on you O' Tha'labah, Allah the Most Honored and Glorious has revealed such and such verses about you.' At this, Tha'labah went to the Holy Prophet[saw] and requested to accept his *Sadaqah* from him. He[saw] replied to him that Allah the Blessed and Exalted had forbidden him to accept alms from him. He began to throw dust on his head. The Messenger[saw] of Allah said, 'This is the result of your action. I had advised you but you did not listen to my advice.' So when the Messenger[saw] of Allah refused to accept charity from him, he returned to his home. Thus the Messenger[sa] of Allah passed away and did not accept anything from him. When Hadhrat Abu Bakr[ra] became *Khaliah* he came to him and said, 'You know my position in the eyes of the Messenger[saw] of Allah and my status among the *Ansar*. So accept my *Sadaqah*.' Hadhrat Abu Bakr[ra] said, 'The Messenger[saw] of Allah did not accept charity from you. How can I accept it?' Hadhrat Abu Bakr[ra] did not accept *Sadaqah* from him till he passed away. When Hadhrat 'Umar[ra] became *Khalifah,* he came to him and said, 'O *Amirul Mo'minin* (Leader of the believers)! Accept my *Sadaqah*.' He replied, 'The Messenger[saw] of Allah did not accept it from you, nor did Hadhrat Abu Bakr[ra] -- am I to accept it?' So he passed away and did not accept it. Then Hadhrat 'Uthma-n[ra] became *Khalifah* and he came to him and requested him to accept his *Sadaqah*. He said, 'The Messenger[saw] of Allah did not accept it from you, nor did Hadhrat Abu Bakr[ra] nor Hadhrat 'Umar[ra] -- am I to accept it?' So he did not accept it and Tha'labah died during the period of the Caliphate of Hadhrat 'Uthma-n[ra].

(Tafsir Durri Manthur surah Al-Taubah, p 260/3, Usud al-Ghaba, p 337/1)

Hadhrat Ma'n[ra] bin Yazid[ra] has related: "My father Yazid took out some *Dinars* for charity. He kept these with a person in the mosque. I came and took them and brought them to him (my father). He said, 'By Allah, I had not intended to give these to you.' So I took the dispute to the Messenger[saw] of Allah. He[saw] said: 'O Yazid, your reward is according to your intentions and O' Ma'n, whatever you have taken is yours.' "

(Bukhari kitabuzzakat bab idha tasaddaq 'ala ibnih wa huwa la yash'ar)

Hadhrat 'Abdur Rahman bin Sa'd As-Sa'idi[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet[saw] appointed a man from the *Azd* tribe by the name of Ibnul-Lutbiyyah as collector of *Zakat*. When he returned from his assignment he said: "This is for you and this is for me, as it has been given to me as a gift. Thereupon the Messenger[saw] of Allah ascended the pulpit, praised and glorified Allah and then said: 'I appoint a man from among you to carry out some duty in connection with that which Allah has committed to me and he comes back and says: 'This is yours and that has been presented to me as a gift.' If he is telling the truth why did he not sit in the house of his father or mother so that his gifts should have come to him? By Allah, none of you should take anything to which he has no right, otherwise he will meet Allah the Exalted on the Day of Judgment carrying that thing. So let me not see any of you meet Allah carrying a grunting camel or a mooing cow or a bleating goat.' Then he raised his arms so high that the white of both his armpits became visible and his supplication went up: 'O Allah, I have conveyed (Your Command).' "

(Muslim kitabul imaah bab tahrim hadaya al'ama-)

FASTING IN RAMADAN

FASTING

Fasting is a form of worship found universally in the world religions. Although there are vast differences regarding the mode of fasting and the conditions applied to it, the central idea of fasting is present everywhere. Fasting in Islam is a highly developed institution. There are two types of injunctions with regards to fasting. One relates to obligatory fasting and the other to optional. Obligatory fasting is further divided into following two categories:

1 .There is one full month in every year in which fasting is prescribed for Muslims all over the world. As the month is a lunar month, so it keeps changing around the year in relation to the solar months.

   Fasting in Islam begins everywhere at the first appearance of dawn, and ends with sunset. During this period one is expected to abstain from all food and drink, and conjugal relations, completely. Furthermore, a greater part of the night is spent in spiritual exercises such as recitation of the Holy Qur'an and offering of the *Tahajjud* Prayers, which make the very essence of fasting. During the month of Fasting, Muslims are required to redouble their efforts in alms-giving and care for the destitute.

2. Other obligatory fasting is most often related to seeking forgiveness of God for sins. This includes violation of the obligatory fasts.

The voluntary fasting is so well promoted that it becomes a part of the righteous Muslim's way of life. As it is expected that the Prayers offered in fasting are more productive, some people keep extra fasts to ward off their problems, but some do it only for the sake of winning Allah's special favors.

The institution of fasting is extremely important because it cultivates the believer in almost every area of his spiritual life. Among other things, he learns through personal experience about what hunger, poverty, loneliness and discomforts mean to the less fortunate sections of the society. Absentation from even such practices during the month of *Ramadan* as are permissible in everyday life plays a constructive role in refining the human character.

(An Elementary Study of Islam, Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, pp 39-42)

FASTING IN RAMADAN

The Holy Qur'an refers to *Ramadan* as a blessed month. The revelation of the Holy Qur'an ensued in the month of *Ramadan*.

"The month of *Ramadan* is that in which the Qur'an was revealed as a guidance for mankind with clear proofs of guidance and judgment (between right and wrong)." (2:186)

The Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] is reported to have said about the month of *Ramadan*:

"When *Ramadan* arrives, the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hell are locked up and Satans are put in chains."

(Bukhari - p. 255)

Ramadan is the month of divine blessings and mercy. The Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] used to devote a lot of time, energy and money in supplications and charity.

OBLIGATION TO FAST

Every adult, sane and capable (healthy) Muslim male and female is bound to fast in the month of *Ramadan*. Travelers and sick persons are exempted with the condition that they should complete the omitted days of fasting later on (before the advent of the next Ramadan). The following categories of people are excused from fasting on the condition that they should pay expiation (*Fidya*) by feeding a poor man for each omitted fast.

1. The sick and the aged and infirm who have no hope of having a chance to observe fasting in *Ramadan.*
2. Expectant ladies and nursing mothers who breast-feed their babies.

The Holy Qur'an says:

But whosoever among you

is sick or is on a journey shall fast same number of other days, and for those who are able to fast only with great difficulty is an expiation - the feeding of a poor man." (2:185)

BEGINNING OF THE FASTING MONTH

The following *Hadith* of the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] deals with this issue: "Do not start fasting with out observing the crescent (of *Ramadan*)"

(Bukhari, p. 255)

lt has two aspects:

(a) Observing with the eyes
(b) Observing as a result of knowledge

The sight of the crescent moon, on a clear day, by a single honest and dependable individual is legally sufficient to start fasting. The consequent announcement of the start of *Ramadan* in the electronic media (radio, TV) is valid. The completion of 30 days of Sha 'ban (month preceding *Ramadan*) is also a valid reason. Knowledgeable authorities can decide the matter and guide the community accordingly.

However it is important to take into account the aspect of the horizon while considering the astronomical appearance of the crescent at a particular location. Such sighting of the crescent applies to only those areas or regions, which share the same horizon and are not too far away. For example, Pakistan and the United Kingdom do not have the same horizon and are separated by thousands of miles. The observing of the *Ramadan* crescent in England will not be binding on people living in Pakistan.

INTENTION (*NIYYA*) FOR FASTING

It is necessary that one should intend to keep the fast as a religious obligation. The Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] is reported to have said:

"He who fasts without having an intention for observing fast, prior to *Fajr*, is without a fast."

(Tirmadhi, p. 87)

There is no fixed set of words to be used as the declaration of intention. Intention or *Niyya* is actually the existence of that firm determination to refrain from eating, drinking, etc., for the purpose of fasting. For a voluntary fast, one can make intention up to *Zuhr* Prayer provided he/ she has not tasted a food or a drink up to that time. The same applies to *Ramadan* fast in case of a genuine circumstance.

TIME TO START AND END THE FAST

The Holy Qur'an says: "And eat and drink until the while thread becomes distinct to you from the black thread of dawn. Then complete the fast till nightfall." (2: 188)

The following *Hadith* of The Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] deals with the same subject:

"When the night approaches and the day retreats and the sun has set, the one observing the fast breaks it."

(Tirmadhi, p. 88)

Keeping fast with some food around midnight or without taking meals at dawn is not in accordance with the practice (*Sunnah*) of the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw]. The showering of divine blessings is associated with following the practice of the Holy Prophet[saw], which is partaking of meals before breaking of dawn, known as "*sahoor*". The Holy Prophet[saw] advised his companions with the following words: "Take breakfast before the fast begins, there is blessing in breakfast."

(Bukhari, p. 257)

Nowadays we can easily estimate the time for the breaking of dawn (time to stop eating) with reference to the time of sunrise. lt is an hour and twenty-two minutes before the sunrise. The next activity is the *Fajr* prayer. The time between the two (end of *Sahoor* and start of *Fajr* Prayer) is roughly equal to the time spent on the recitation of fifty verses of The Holy Qur' an.

The END OF THE FAST

Soon after the sunset, one should hasten to break the fast. Unnecessary delay in breaking the fast is not a correct attitude. The Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] is reported to have said:

"My people will adhere to good as long as they do not delay in breaking the fast."

(Bukhari, p. 263)

Another *Hadith* narrated by Abdullah Ibn Aufa' gives some interesting details:

'We were with the Holy Prophet[saw] in the course of a journey, when he was observing a voluntary

fast. When the sunset came he said to someone: so and so, dismount and prepare the food for us. He answered: Messenger[saw] of Allah if you would let be dark. He repeated: Dismount and prepare the *Aftari* (food) for us. The man said: there is daylight still. The Holy Prophet" said a third time: Dismount and prepare the *Aftari* for us. On this the man dismounted and brought him the *Aftari.* The Holy Prophet[saw] ate of it and pointing to the East said: When you perceive the night approaching from that direction let the one observing the fast break it."

(Muslim, p. 456)

Breaking the fast with dates, milk or water is the practice (*Sunnah*) of The Holy Prophet". Salman Ibn Amir Dhabi' relates that The Holy Prophet Muhamma[saw] said:

"Break your fast with a date, or else with water for it is pure."

(Tirmidhi, p. 87-88)

The following prayer should be recited at the time of breaking the fast:

"O Allah I observed the fast for Thy sake and I break it with food provided by Thee."

(Abu Daud, p. 322)

After breaking the fast a believer may add the following words:

"Thirst has been quenched, arteries have been refreshed and the reward for fasting would be granted by the grace of Allah."

(Abu Daud, p. 321)

According to a saying of the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw], he who makes arrangement for breaking of the fast of another believer is granted the reward of observing a fast, without diminishing the reward of the other.

INFRACTIONS WHILE FASTING

The following factors invalidate the fast:

1. Eating and drinking knowingly/willfully
2. Sexual intercourse (Any seminal emission)
3 Enema
4. Injection
5. Deliberate vomiting

According to a Hadith, involuntary vomiting does not vitiate the fast. There is no *'Qada'* or restitution for it.

(Tirmadhi, p. 90)

Such a person should complete the fast.

There is *Qada* (restitution) as well as *Kaffara* (atonement) for breaking a fast deliberately. *'Qada'* consists of fasting one day for each invalidated fast. *'Kaffara'* is the penalty for the same offence and consist of two months of consecutive fasting or feeding of sixty poor or needy people. Sixty poor persons can be fed collectively on a single day or one poor man can be given provisions or cash to cover food expenses for sixty days.

If the man guilty of breaking a fast deliberately, himself is a poor and needy person and cannot afford to feed sixty poor people, he can leave his matter with Allah, heavily relying on his infinite mercy and forgiveness.

(Bukhari, p. 259)

Women in their period of *'Hayd'* (Menstruation) or *'Nifas'* (post -natal bleeding) are not allowed to fast. Since there is *'Qada'* for the omitted days of fasting, they are required to make up later for the missed days.

FACTORS WHICH DO NOT INVALIDATE FASTING

The following actions or incidents do not vitiate fasting:

1. Eating and drinking while truly forgetting that he/she is fasting.
2. Involuntary entering of smoke, dust, fly, gnat, etc. into throat or mouth. It applies to droplets of water while gargling or swallowing of one's saliva.
3. Entry of water into the external ear
4. Pouring of ear drops
5. Bleeding from the gums and teeth
6. Brushing teeth with a brush or acacia twig (*'Miswak'*)
7. Smelling of perfume
8. Anointing of the head or beard
9. Kissing a child or wife
10 Wet dream
11 Failure to take ritual bath before *'Sahoor'*, after having consorted with wife during the night of fasting.
12 Nose bleed
13 Applying of *Kajal* (eye cosmetic) by females. Men are forbidden from doing this during the daytime.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] has prohibited men from using eye cosmetic while fasting

(Musnad Darrmy, p. 157)

In answer to a similar question, the Promised Messiah[as] said:

"There is no express need for use of eye cosmetic during the day in *Ramadan*. Let him apply it at night."

(Badr, February 7, 1907)

DISRESPECT FOR *RAMADAN*

Failure to observe fasting in the month of *Ramadan*, without valid reason or for minor excuses is a wrong and unfortunate development. The Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] is reported to have said:

"If someone neglects a single fast in *Ramadan*, without an acceptable excuse, he cannot make amends for the omission even by fasting for the rest of his life."

(Musnad Darmy, p. 156)

The following remarks of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II[ra] emphasize the importance of fasting:

"Some people, who regard fasting as an ordinary commandment, fail to observe it for trivial excuses. Some of them do not fast for fear of falling sick. This is not a valid excuse. One can be exempted from fasting only when he is actually sick and the nature of the sickness is such that fasting may worsen it. In the face of a minor indisposition or a condition which cannot be affected adversely by fasting, neglecting of fast, being unlawful, cannot be justified."

(Al-Fazl, April 11, 1925)

PRONOUNCEMENTS (FATAWA) FASTING AND INTENTION (NIYYA)

Question: Is the declaration of intention necessary for fasting?

Answer: Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II[ra] said:

"Intention is necessary for fasting. No reward is credited without intention. Intention is the determination of heart and mind."

(Al-Fazl, July 28, 1914)

Take the case of a man who remained extremely absorbed in his work or slept the whole day without tasting food or drink. The hunger and thirst of this man cannot be regarded as fasting. The major difference is that he had no intention of keeping fast.

Question: A person did not intend to fast at the time of '*Sahoor*' but made an intention to do so around 10 or 11 0' clock. Is this type of 'fast' a valid fast?

Answer: The right time for making the intention for fasting is before dawn i.e. *Sahoor* time. However, an exceptional situation can be considered on its merit. As an example consider the case of a man who was not aware that the month of Ramadan has already started. On getting up he learnt that it was the first day of *Ramadan*. He can make the intention for observing fast provided he has not taken food up to that time.

Hadhrat Ibn-e-Umar' reports on the authority of Hadhrat Hafsa[ra] that the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] remarked:

"Only that man's fast is valid who made a firm intention for fasting on that day before *Fajr*."

(Tirmadhi, p. 91)

Another *Hadith* shows that there is some flexibility in the case of voluntary fasting. The *Hadith* reveals that at times the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] wouid come home in the morning and ask for some food for breakfast. On finding that no food was available, he would opt to observe a fast.

(Muslim, p. 481)

Another *Hadith* refers to a particular situation when, before noon, the news reached Medina that the *Ramadan* crescent had been sighted in the surrounding areas. The Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] decreed:

"He who has not eaten anything from dawn should intend to complete fast but those who have taken meals should fast on another day as restitution *('Qada')*"

(Abu Daud, p. 320)

Question:

(a) Somebody intended to observe a voluntary fast but could not take meals at *Sahoor* time. Should he complete his fast?

(b) Another individual fell sick in the night of *Ramadan* but felt much better at the time of *Sahoor*. Is he allowed to fast on that day?

Answer:

(a) Taking meal at *Sahoor* is a highly recommended *Sunnah*

(practice) of The Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] but is not an essential for fasting. Such a person can proceed to complete the fast.

(b) If he feels better and fit, he should fast on that day.

Question: Is taking of meals (*Sahoor*) a legal essential for fasting?

Answer: Partaking of meal for fasting is a source of great blessing. In case of a special situation one can fast without taking food before dawn.

It may be noted that it is an important *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet[saw]. Hadhrat Anas[ra] narrates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said:

"Take food before fasting because such a food is blessed."

(Bokhari, p. 257)

Another *Hadith* conveys that angels invoke blessings on a person who takes meals before observing the fast.

(Sharah (commentary) *Muatta Imam Malik, Vol. 3, p. 15)*

Question: It is reported that the following question was presented to the Promised Messiah[as] for guidance:

"While I was in my room, considering that there was enough time to keep fast, I ate with the intention of observing fast. Thereafter someone pointed out to me that the white thread of dawn was already visible. What should I do in this case?"

Answer: The Promised Messiah[as] replied:

"His fast is valid. There is no need to keep a substitute fast as retribution (*'Qada'*) because he has observed precaution and has made intention for the fasting."

(The *Badr*, February 4, 1907)

Question: What is the meaning of the following Qur'anic verse in the light of the Arabic lexicon:

"Then complete the fast till nightfall." (2:188)

Answer: According to the Arabic lexicon the word *'lail'* (night) refers to the time from sunset to sunrise but in accordance with the Holy Prophet's[saw] *Sunnah* and its collective implementation by generations of Islamic *Ummah*, with reference to fasting, the word night in this verse does not mean the entire span of night but it refers to that part of the night which is meant for the breaking of the fast. The Qur'anic usage of the term confirms that it refers to the beginning of night i.e., the time of sunset.

An important *Hadith*, recorded in both *Bukhari* and *Muslim* endorses this concept. The Hadith reads:

"When you perceive the night approaching from the East and sun setting in the West, let the one observing the fast break it."

(*Bukhari*, p. 262; *Muslim*, p.456)

The Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] is reported to have said:

"My people will adhere to good as long as they do not delay the breaking of the fast."

(Tirmadhi, p. 88)

Yet another *Hadith* states:

"Jews and Christians delay the breaking of their fast. Muslims should not follow them (i.e., they should hasten to break the fast soon after sunset)."

(Ibn-e-Majah, p. 122)

FASTING AND TRAVELING

i. The Promised Messiah[as] regarded fasting during journey or sickness as a violation of Divine commandment contained in the Holy Qur'an. The Promised Messiah[as] deduced his pronouncement from the following Qur'anic verse: "The prescribed fasting is for a fixed number of days, but who so among you is sick or is on a journey shall fast the same number of other days." (2:185)

ii. The Promised Messiah[as] referred to Qadian (the *Jama'at* Headquarters) as the second home of all traveling Ahmadi Muslims and by virtue of that fact allowed them to fast while in Qadian. He also permitted them not to fast by benefiting from the leave granted to travelers.

iii. Considering the physical displacement, a journey terminating in the *Jama'at* Headquarters, is still a journey. Since the Holy Qur'an exempts travelers from fasting, the travelers who reached Qadian before sunset, were told to break their fast on the instruction of the Promised

Messiah[as].

iv. The people who are obliged to travel as part of their professional duties i.e., railway guards, drivers, pilots and postal workers who deliver mail in rural areas, would not be regarded as travelers. The people belonging to this class, are required to fast during *Ramadan.*

(*Fiqah-e-Ahinadiyya,* p. 288)

The Promised Messiah[as] has elaborated this issue from another angle:

"If someone travels by rail and does not experience any difficulty, he may fast, otherwise he is entitled to benefit from the leave granted by Allah."

(The *Al-Hakam*, December 24, 1900)

Question: Somebody is fasting but unexpectedly a situation has arisen that demands immediate traveling. Should he break his fast?

Answer: Traveling in *Ramadan* should be avoided. It should be undertaken only when one is compelled by circumstances beyond his control. It should be left to his discretion to embark upon a journey or not. In that case he himself would be answerable to Allah for his choice.

FASTING WHILE TRAVELING

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II[ra] once gave the following remarks on the issue:

"My belief about traveling is that the journey which is undertaken after '*Sahoor*' and which ends before sunset is not a journey from point of view of fasting. Maybe some jurists have a dissident opinion on this point but I think that Islamic *Shariah* stops us from fasting while traveling but does not ban traveling while fasting. Therefore a journey which starts after '*Sahoor*' and ends before sunset is not a journey for the purpose of fasting. One can travel in the state of fast but cannot fast when traveling."

(The *Al-Fazl,* September 25, 1942)

Question: What does Islam teach regarding fasting while on a journey? What is the minimum distance in miles which makes a journey permissible for not observing fasting?

Answer: Travelers are exempted from fasting in the month of *Ramadan.* However, it is important that such a person should not eat or drink in public places. Islamic *Shariah* has not stated quantitatively the minimum or maximum distance in miles. It has been left to the discretion of the traveler.

NURSING MOTHERS, EXPECTANT LADIES, MINORS AND STUDENTS

The Holy Qur'an exempts from fasting the sick and the travelers. Such exemption does not exist in the Holy Qur'an for nursing mothers and pregnant ladies but the Holy Prophet Muhamma[saw] has placed them in the category of 'the sick'. Likewise children, who are in need of rich nourishment for growth, can be placed in the same category. The same applies to the students, with a weak constitution, who are preparing for examinations and are exposed to extreme mental stress. At times such students fall sick physically or mentally. One should evaluate this situation with utmost care. What is the benefit of fasting for a few days, in such circumstances and becoming deprived of the blessing of fasting for the rest of the life.

(The *Al-Fazl,* Vol. 18, No. 88, 1930 -31)

Question: With reference to fasting, what does Islam teach concerning a student who has to study hard for forthcoming examinations?

Answer: Islam does not teach us to make fasting an excuse to run away from our day-to-day normal activities. If the work schedule of a person makes fasting practically unbearable, then he can be placed in the category of 'the sick'. In that case, he himself is solely responsible for this decision or choice. Allah would treat him in the light of his intention and the existing situation. In such circumstances, a man himself is the best judge of his heart and mind.

A person who always falls sick on account of observance of fasting, is exempted from this exercise. If it is a kind of permanent condition, then he is permanently exempted. But if this condition is the result of a particular weather or season then he should fast the same number of days at some other time of the year. The situation must be handled with a high degree of righteousness. His excuse of being 'sick' must be valid and genuine.

(The *Al-Fazl,* May 22, 1922)

Question: Periodically *Ramadan* comes in a season when farmworkers have to do a lot of labor

work in the fields. The same applies to other unskilled laborers who have to perform heavy manual work. What is the Islamic teaching in respect to these affected people?

Answer: The following remarks of the Promised Messiah shed light on the subject:

"The *Hadith* of the Holy Prophet[saw] teaches that actions would be judged in the light of intentions. The affected people know the true nature of their situation. Every individual should decide in the spirit of high degree of righteousness and piety. If a person can substitute another laborer, he should do so in order to be able to observe fasting, otherwise he falls in the category of 'the sick'. Whenever he is able, he should fast for the omitted days of fasting, during a relatively convenient season.

(The *Badr,* September 26, 1907)

Somebody asked the Promised Messiah[as] about fasting by a diabetic? He replied:

"The sick are exempted from fasting and it is more harmful for a person who is affected by diabetes."

(The *Al-Fazl,* July 15, 1915)

CHRONIC DISEASES AND AILMENTS

Some chronic diseases do not affect the daily activities and routine of the ailing individuals. Such a person cannot be regarded as 'the sick' with reference to fasting.

The Promised Messiah[as] was once requested for guidance on the subject of traveling as a part of profession, he replied:

"The traveling of such a person cannot be accepted as the journey for the purpose of fasting. His traveling is part and parcel of his profession. There are some medical conditions, which do not interfere with the routine of the affected person. It has been observed that some members of the armed forces, suffer from one or the other diseases but discharge all duties and do all sorts of jobs. A man who is afflicted by an attack of dysentery does not leave his job for good. If a man can manage to do all other things, why can he not observe fasting? The fact is that the people who do not wish to observe fasting, try to take refuge in lame excuses.

There is no doubt that the Holy Qur'an exempts the sick and the travelers from fasting and we do emphasize that this Qur'anic teaching should be duly honored, but those who overstretch this exception, despite the fact that they can easily fast or can make amends for omitted days of fasting, are sinful in the sight of Allah like a man who deliberately fails to fast in the month of *Ramadan.* Therefore, it is binding on affected Ahmadis to fast for the omitted days of fasting (on account of sickness or traveling) later on. Some jurists believe that omitted fast cannot be observed in the next year (i.e., after the advent of the next *Ramadan*), but in my opinion, if somebody has not fasted for the omitted days of fasting, in the same year, out of forgetfulness or ignorance, his omission is pardonable. There is no restitution (*'Qada'*) for not fasting for an omitted fast if it has been done knowingly. Same applies to deliberate non-observance of obligatory Prayer (*Salat*). But if he forgot to fast for the omitted days of fasting or maybe made a wrong legal deduction, he can fast for all the omitted days, as soon as possible, even in the next year."

(The *Al-Fazl,* August 16, 1948)

****

HADITH

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] relates that on the authority of Allah the Blessed and Exalted, the Holy Prophet[saw] said: "A servant commits a sin and then supplicates: 'O Allah! Forgive me my sin.' On which Allah, the Blessed and Exalted says: 'My servant committed a sin and then realized that he has a Lord Who forgives sin and can also call to account for it.' The servant reverts back and commits sin and supplicates again: 'O Lord, forgive me my sin.' The Blessed and Exalted said: 'My servant committed a sin and then realized that he has a Lord Who forgives sin and can also call to account for it.' He reverts back again and commits sin and supplicates again: 'O Lord, forgive me my sin.' The Blessed and Exalted said, 'My servant committed a sin and then realized that he has a Lord Who forgives sin and can also call to account for it. O my servant, I have granted you forgiveness. Therefore, he should do what pleases him. ' "

(Muslim kitabuttaubah bab qauluttaubah minadhdhanubi wa an takrartudhdhanubi wattaubah, Bukhari kitabuttauhid)

****

RAMADAN - AN IDEAL MONTH FOR PURITY OF THE HEART

Mubashir Mahmood

Translated by Mansura B. Minhas

The Blessings of Fasting

With Allah's Grace we are passing through a month which is the most holy and blessed; whose thirty days are most loved by Allah. Its nights are a promise of Allah:

إِنِّي قَرِيبٌ

I am near.

Among them is a night which brings glad tidings of peace and prosperity, which is superior to a thousand nights. In this month, the most superior book Qur'an was revealed. All the prayers offered in this month reap greater blessings than those offered during the rest of the year. The first part bestows mercy, the second offers forgiveness and the last part is the most blessed and brings one closer to God.

Fasting was enjoined upon other nations before and is not for Muslims only. In this month, Satan is confined and the doors of heaven are opened. About this month, the Prophet of God, *Rasul Allah*[saw] informed that a person is unfortunate if he passed through *Ramadan* and was not forgiven. *Imam* of the time, the Promised Messiah[as] has stated the following about this month:

"This is an ideal month for the purity of the heart. Revelations in this month are in abundance. *Salat* purifies the souls and fasting enlightens the heart".

(Malfoozat Vol 4 Page 256

Thus, we should make the following prayer of the Promised Messiah[as] so that we are not deprived of the blessings of this great month. Hazoor states that man should pray that "God, this is a blessed month. I am deprived of its blessings and who knows if I will be alive next year and able to make up for the missed fasts. If a man asks Allah for help, I'm sure that He will give strength to such a heart. In my opinion, if a man asks for Allah's help (with sincerity and purity of heart) so that he does not remain deprived in this month, then Allah does not keep him deprived. In such a state, if a man falls sick in *Ramadan*, then in that sickness is a mercy for him. Because every action is gauged by its intention and a true believer must ensure that he makes himself the beloved in the way of God, through his self. If a person is unable to fast, but he has a sincere intention that if he was well then he would fast, and his heart is aching for that, then angels will keep fast for him. Only if it is not an excuse, then God will never deprive him of the blessings.

Not Fasting Deliberately is a Sin

The Holy Qur'an says:

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ

Fasting is prescribed for you (2;184)

Thus the Holy Prophet[saw] said that missing fast deliberately is a sin and there is no atonement for it. Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III[rh] said that for every adult and wise believer it is important to keep fast. If he doesn't keep fast without any reasonable excuse, he will be deemed sinful in the eyes of God.

(Khutabat-e-Nasir Vol 1 page 70)

About those who miss the fast due to ordinary excuses, the Promised Messiah[as] said:

"If fasting is a burden for a person (due to weakness of the self) and he believes that he is sick and his health is such that if he misses a meal he would suffer, then that person deems the blessing of God a burden ,then how can he deserve reward".

(Malfoozat Vol 4 page 258)

According to the *Hadith,* a person is unfortunate who passes through *Ramadan* and is not forgiven. In the commentary of this *Hadith,* Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV[rh] says:

"The doors of hell are not closed for every person. It means that there is a likelihood of the closing of the doors of hell and a person is extremely unfortunate, that all the doors of hell are closed on him and he still does not perform deeds which would result in the closing of these doors".

(Khutabat-e-Tahir Vol 5 page 389)

The Promised Messiah[as] said:

"My state is such that only if I am close to dying, I miss fasting. I don't feel like missing fasts. These are blessed days in which Allah bestows grace and mercy".

(Malfoozat Vol 1 page 439)

Obligation to Fast

About the right age to start fasting, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV[rh] said:

"We remember that in Qadian, when the level of fasting was very high (by the grace of God) and without a solid reason, no Ahmadi missed the fasts. It was the training of the Promised Messiah[as]; his companions and early adherents who were alive from whom they had received training. Thus, in that time no one could say that Ahmadis were weak in fasting. This was the way - that from childhood, mothers would impart training at home and from the age of 9, 10, children would start observing the fast. The age of maturity was not what was established by the British, that they said 21 years so it meant that a person would reach maturity at 21 and the *Shariah* would apply at the age of 21 and if the British set 18 as the maturity age, then after 18 years the *Shariah* would apply. In normal human terms, in fact according to the norms, whenever a person achieved maturity, he would try to keep all the fasts. With regards to the right age for fasting, there are disagreements between the *Fiqahs* and they probably provide ease to children who are passing through a growing phase. In certain *Fiqahs,* there is no extraordinary strictness. In fact, there is encouragement and it was tried that children who are 12, 13, 14, they are encouraged so that they observe the maximum number of fasts in *Ramadan*. And when they reach the mature age of 18, 19 years, they observed all the fasts in *Ramadan*. In this regard, I have seen that there is a gradual deterioration, especially after Partition.

Students Don't Suffer Academically Due to Fasting

"The new generation takes fasting very lightly and unfortunately even the parents do the same. They take it non-seriously - as if it is more important for them that their child is studying and his studies should not be affected. Whereas, he might be wasting time watching TV and indulging in other frivolous activities but those factors don't affect them. But about fasting they feel so strongly that the child's health might suffer. They are not as concerned about other activities that affect the health; it is only the fasting that worries them that it would ruin the health. This is completely wrong and just a doubt. Fasting doesn't affect studies adversely, whereas those who are studious, they study more in *Ramadan*. I was also such a student who did not read many course books, but in *Ramadan*, I had more opportunities. Since there weren't any other interests, it was only that we read the Holy Quran or religious knowledge books. Since other activities are curtailed, there is more time to study. Even if there is less time, due to the prayers and *Salat*, in *Ramadan* students are blessed. They can never suffer academically. Only those suffer, who don't fast thinking that it would hurt them. The knowledge of such people can never be blessed and even if they apparently achieve success, it is futile and meaningless. They lose the bigger advantage and only gain a minor benefit. The Holy Quran says:

إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ

Only if you knew! (2:185)

If you knew, you would have never lost this advantage. Thus, all the *Jama'ats* around the world must ensure that they perform a detailed analysis in *Ramadan*. For children (whose parents are unable to), it must be reiterated through *Khudamul Ahmadiyya*, through *Lajna Imaillah* and efforts must be made through *Ansarullah*. Whatever system the *Jama'at* establishes, every Ahmadi must receive this message directly that God has made fasting obligatory upon you in this month. Only if you are not sick or not travelling, then you have no choice but to fast".

(Friday Sermon 15 April 1988)

How Should *Ramadan* be Spent?

Holy Prophet[saw] said that whoever spends *Ramadan* with faith will be forgiven. He also said that God doesn't wish that you stay hungry, He doesn't need it.

The Promised Messiah[as] said that

fasting is not that a person remains hungry and thirsty, but its essence and effect which is established through experience is that it is in man's nature that the less he eats, the more his spirituality is purified. Powers are enhanced and it is God's purpose that one source of food is lessened and the other is enhanced. A person who fasts must always ensure that it doesn't mean that he should remain hungry; rather he must remain engrossed in the remembrance of Allah so that he achieves His nearness. Thus the purpose of fasting is that a person leaves the food which nourishes the body to attain the other food that satisfies and fulfills the soul.

According to the Promised Messiah 'This is an ideal month for the enlightenment of the heart'. Thus to enlighten the heart, to purify the soul and to get rid of the ills of the physical state, we must try our utmost to fulfill the obligation of *Ramadanul Mubarak*. We must decorate this month with all types of prayers.

Offering Prayers in Congregation

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V[sba] says:

"It is important to offer *Salat* in congregation in ordinary days, but it is essential to fervently safeguard congregational prayers in *Ramadan.*"

Tahajjud

In *Ramadan*, attention must not be towards observing fasts only; rather attention must also be paid to the etiquettes of fast. Once I performed a cursory analysis and asked youngsters whether they had kept fast or not, how was it and how was it observed. It was often noticed that the common reply was that the fast was kept after eating *Sehri* in the morning and there was no mention of *Nawafil.* Whereas, once the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] said that the fasts of *Ramadan* are obligatory and by adding the *Sunnah* of *Tahajjud*, have created further means of blessings.

(Al-Targheeb o Al-Tarheeb Kitab-us Saum Hadith # 1487)

Tahajjud is a very good thing and the Holy Qur'an has mentioned it with a lot of praise and it has a lot of blessings and is the pathway to *Maqam-e-Mahmood.* The connection between *Tahajjud* and *Ramadan ul Mubarak* is very deep. Hadhrat Ayesha Siddiqua[ra] said:

'Besides *Ramadan*, I have not seen Holy Prophet[saw] offer such lengthy *Tahajjud* - that sometimes he would remain standing throughout the night

(Bukhari Kitabus Salat ul Taraweeh Hadith # 1884)

Tahajjud has a deep connection with *Ramadan.* The fasts that are devoid of *Tahajjud* are incomplete and meaningless. Thus, children must especially be advised about fasting. The generations that were raised in Qadian, they observed fasting and *Tahajjud* and could never imagine that fasting could be observed without *Tahajjud.* There were some who not only wanted to offer *Tahajjud* but also wished to hear the recitation of the Holy Qur'an. Thus, for such people (men and women), there were arrangements of *Taraweeh.* If children are unable to offer 11, they must be advised to start offering 7 *Nawafil* and explained that it was the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet[saw]. Thus, they would have a greater love for *Nawafil* and will remember that they are offering them because our leader and master Holy Prophet[saw] did the same.

Recitation of the Holy Qur'an in *Ramadan*

Holy Prophet[saw] said: 'My *Ummah's* worship, one that carries the greatest blessing is the recitation of the Holy Qur'an'. Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih III[rh] said the *Ummah* should know that in *Ramadhan,* the Holy Qur'an should be recited in abundance. We could not have known Allah's wishes without the Holy Qur'an; therefore it is important that the Holy Qur'an is recited. Recitation does not mean just reading the words of the Qur'an, rather those who are able and blessed with acumen, it is essential that they ponder over its meanings. The above *Hadith* mentions that Holy Qura'n must be read and must also be understood. Then according to one's capacity and understanding, it must also be acted upon.

(Khutbat-e-Nasir Vol 1 page 74)

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V[aba] said:

'In the *Ramadan* before the Holy Prophet's[saw] death, the Qur'an was read twice. There was a great lesson in it that you must also read it carefully. It must be read at other times too but greater attention must be paid during this month. It must be read, its translation must also be read and wherever there is a facility of *Dars*, people must also listen to the *Dars*'.

(Khutabat-e-Masroor Vol 1 page 746)

May Allah enable us to reap the blessings of *Ramadan. Ameen.*

GENDER EQUALITY IN THE HOLY QUR'AN

Dr. Lutf ur Rehman. Nashville, TN

With the advent of modern education and inclusion of women in the workforce over the last two centuries, the patriarchal nature of societies is also in a state of flux. Over the course of human history, men have dominated the role of leadership in these societies. Even today a great majority of human population lives in this arrangement. It worked well when physical strength was an asset. Most of the work was done manually and fighting in the army required physical strength. Men had a great advantage over women in this area. Therefore the societies were aligned to suit their interests. Women were assigned to a subservient role and were mostly confined to home and domestic work. Over the course of human history this role of women – rearing children and caring for the home and their husbands – became their normal function in the society. They were not included in the affairs of men and were considered inferior in many ways. Men literally owned their women like livestock and property. Women had no rights – their fate was decided by the word and wishes of their men. They were not given education, had no say in their marriage, could not own property, and required permission of their men folk to do anything in their lives. Any woman who would not follow such norms in the society was punished and sometimes even killed by her own father, brother or husband, and it was considered honorable for men to do so. Political and religious systems were often used to perpetuate such oppression of women.

The Christian Arab writer, Norma Khouri noted, honor killings originate from the belief that a woman's chastity is the property of her family, a cultural norm that comes "from our ancient tribal days, from the Hammurabi and Assyrian tribes of 1200 B.C. (Honor Lost: Love and Death in Modern Day Jordan)

Matthew A. Goldstein, J.D. (Arizona), has also noted that honor killings were encouraged in ancient Rome, where male family members who did not take actions against the female adulterers in their family were "actively persecuted". (The biological roots of heat-of-passion crimes and honor killings)

The Roman law of 'pater familias' gave complete control to the men of the family for both their children and wives. Under these laws, the lives of children and wives were at the sole discretion of the men in their family.

In the sixth century Arabia, men were ashamed if a daughter was born in their household. Many who considered themselves courageous and brave would bury their daughters after their birth to get rid of the shame. The practice was considered honorable. Qays bin Asim, ancient leader of Banu Tamim is credited by some historians as the first to kill children on the basis of honor. It is recorded that he murdered all of his daughters to prevent them from ever causing him any kind of dishonor. This is the time which was called the time of ignorance or "*Jahiliyyah*" by the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw]. He brought a message which was forward looking, open minded and based upon principals of justice for all – men and women. The Holy Qur'an is the Word of God and a lasting source of guidance for all Muslims for all times. Let us examine if the Qur'an accepts or prescribes an inferior role for women.

Creation

The Qur'an uses the word *khalaqa* to describe creation. *Khalaqa* means to create, to bring something into existence from a state of non-existence. The account of creation in the Qur'an also makes it clear that the creation happened in several steps and not all at once.

"Just recall the time when your Lord said to the angels, "I am going to create a human of clay: (*primordial soup*) when I perfect it in every way (*evolution*), and blow into it of my ruh (*spiritual awareness*), all of you should bow down before it. (38: 72-73)

The Qur'an addresses many aspects of creation in different verses. If we look at the creation of human beings, the Qur'an does not tell us if man was created before the woman or if woman was created from man thus implying an inferior status as part is not equal to the whole. Qur'an does not say that Adam was the first man. It also does not say that Eve was created from Adam's rib. These concepts have come to us from the Bible.

"And God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man" (Genesis 2:21-22)

There are some *Ahadith* which tell us that Eve was created from man's rib but all of them are considered weak as their sources are weak and all originated from one person, Ibn Abbas. The content (*matn*) of these *Ahadith* is also in contradiction to Qur'anic version of creation. Therefore these *Ahadith* are best disregarded.

Then there are some other *Ahadith* where women are compared with the shape of a rib or derived from a rib. Some are mentioned in Bukhari and Muslim, the two most influential *Hadith* collections in *Sunni* Islam. One such hadith is quoted here:

'Abd al-'Aziz related to us that he was reporting on the authority of 'Abd Allah who said: Malik had told us that he was reporting on the authority of Abu Zinad who was reporting on the authority of Al-A'raj who was reporting on the authority of Abu Hurairah[ra] who said: Allah's *Rasul*[saw] said: The woman is like a rib, if you try to straighten her, she will break. So if you want to get benefit from her, do so while she still has some crookedness. (Bukhari)

With regards to the *isnad* (list of transmitters) the following may be noted: All these *Ahadith* are cited on the authority of Abu Hurairah[ra], a Companion who was regarded as controversial by many early Muslim scholars, including *Imam* Abu Hanifah (A.D. 700-767), founder of the largest Sunni school of law (*fiqh*). All six of such *Ahadith* in Bukhari and Muslim are *gharib* (the lowest grade of *Hadith* classification) because they contain a number of transmitters who were single reporters. All of these six *Ahadith* are *da'if* (weak) because they have a number of unreliable transmitters. *Matn* (content) of these *Ahadith* is also contrary to Qur'anic version of creation of human beings, which we shall examine now.

"O people be aware of your Lord, Who created you (*humans*) from a single soul (*nafs*) and created therefrom mates for you." (4:2)

"He it is who has created you from a single soul (*nafs*)" (7:190)

"(God) created you (*humans*) from a single soul (*nafs*)" (39:7)

The Qur'an describes creation of human beings from a single soul – *nafs* – which is a gender neutral term. From this *nafs*, God created both man and woman.

Allah also tells us in the Qur'an that He perfected the creation of humans,

"Surely We created the humankind in the best stature." (95:5)

"Allah it is Who .... fashioned you, and perfected your shapes." (40:65)

"Who (God) gave everything He created the best form." (32:7)

Here perfection means that God created humans exactly as He wanted to. Also a look at these verses and many others in the Qur'an make it clear that the creation did not happen all at once. The creation of humans was perfected over time, pointing towards evolution. One of the names of God is "*Musawwir*", meaning an artist.

"He is God, The Creator, The Maker, The Fashioner (*Musawwir*). His are the most beautiful attributes." (59:25)

Just like an artist, God started with the basics and over time brought His creation to perfection. (*process of evolution*)

In the account of creation God has not assigned any superiority to one gender over the other for any reason. Qur'an describes the final step of creation as follows:

"Just recall the time when your Lord said to the angels, "I am going to create a human of clay: (*primordial soup*) when I perfect it in every way (*evolution*), and blow into it of my ruh (*spiritual awareness*), all of you should bow down before it. (38: 72-73)

Once again God put His spirit equally in man and woman.

Adam and Eve in the Garden

It is clear from Qur'anic descriptions that the Garden was never intended as the dwelling place for the humans. Allah's plan for humans was to function in the earth as His trustee.

"And when your Lord said to the angels, I am about to place a vicegerent in the earth." (2:31)

In the Garden humans had no

need to struggle for the basic necessities of life such as food, clothing and shelter.

"It is given unto you that you hunger not therein, neither are you naked, And you thirst not therein nor are you exposed to the sun's heat." (20:119-120)

However in the Garden, and on earth, humans share the same test: the choice between obedience and disobedience. Allah warns Adam and Eve against approaching one of the trees in the Garden. The Qur'an does not give special attributes to the tree itself. It is merely a symbol of the test.

It is noteworthy that, with one exception, the Qur'an always uses the Arabic dual form to tell how Satan tempted both Adam and Eve and how they both disobeyed.

"But Satan caused them both to slip and be expelled from where they resided." (2:37)

In maintaining the dual form, the Qur'an overcomes the negative Biblical and Judaic implications that the woman was the cause of evil and damnation.

"For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression." (1Timothy 2:11-12)

Moreover the Qur'an clearly states that individuals – men and women – are responsible for their own actions.

The one exception to the Qur'anic use of the dual form to refer to the temptation and disobedience of Adam and Eve in the Garden, singles out Adam.

"And the devil whispered to him saying: "O Adam! Shall I show you the tree of immortality and power that does not waste away?" Then the two of them (Adam and his wife) ate of the fruit (of the forbidden tree), so their shame became manifest to them and they started covering themselves with leaves. And Adam disobeyed his Lord, so went astray." (20:122)

Upon recognition of the error that they had made, both of them (Adam and Eve) repented and asked for forgiveness. They said, 'Our Lord we have wronged ourselves; and if You forgive us not and have not mercy on us, we shall surely be of the lost.' (7:24)

Their Lord not only accepted their repentance and forgave them; He demonstrated a very special feature of Himself: mercy and grace. He extended to them, and to all the humans, the explicit guidance – revelation.

We can draw the following guidance from this story of Adam and Eve in the Holy Qur'an: Any human might disobey through forgetfulness, the general nature of human weakness, and the temptations of Satan, but one who recognizes his error, repents and asks for forgiveness, will be forgiven. Moreover, guidance is always available to humankind to remind them of their commitment to Allah and the guile of Satan, the enemy. This is a special mercy from their Lord. However, whoever disobeys through arrogance and intentional rebellion has been promised due punishment and eternal damnation. He is like Satan, who disobeyed and persisted in his arrogant, disobedient ways.

The Equity of Recompense: The Hereafter in the Qur'an

The hereafter is divided into several stages: Death, Resurrection, Judgment and finally, Heaven or Hell.

Death

Death is the first inevitable experience for each and every created being without distinction of gender, class, nationality, or time of existence. It is the first stage of the hereafter for each being. It marks the entrance to that realm.

"Each *nafs* will taste death. And you will be paid on the day of Resurrection only that which you have fairly earned. Whoever is removed from the Fire and is made to enter Paradise, he indeed is triumphant. The life of this world is but comfort of illusion." (3:186)

The term *nafs* is used in Qura'nic discussion of the hereafter. With regard to death, it is that essential part of each being which experiences the passage from life in this known world into the unknown realm of the hereafter. It is central to the consideration of the Hereafter because it is this term that is used to elevate the Qura'nic discussions of recompense in the Hereafter above gender distinctions.

Resurrection

The Resurrection is the first part of the Hereafter, unknown or unacceptable to the Arabs at the time of the revelation.

"And they say: When we are bones and fragments, shall we be raised up a new creation? Say: Be you stones or iron or some created thing that is yet greater in your thoughts. They ask, 'who shall restore us to life?' Say, He who created you the first time." (17:50-52)

The Qur'an is emphatic that the day of Resurrection is unlike anything experienced before.

"O humankind! Fear your Lord. Lo! The earthquake of the Hour (of doom) is a tremendous thing: On that day you will witness that every nursing mother will forget her nursing and every pregnant one will be delivered of her burden, and you will see people as drunken, yet they will not be drunken, but the Doom of Allah will be strong (upon them)." (22:2-3)

Thus the day of Resurrection is a disruption of the order of the reality which we have known and lived.

Judgment

Existence on earth is described in the Qur'an as a trial or test to see the value of the deeds performed by the individuals. At the Resurrection all humans will be brought back to life for judgment, which will be made by Allah, who knows what is secret and what is manifest.

"And not a speck's worth in the earth or in the sky escapes your Lord, nor what is less than that or greater than that." (10:62)

"And whether you make known what is in your minds or hide it, Allah will bring you to account for it." (2:285)

All deeds of every individual will be weighed. This will indicate the true value or measure of the deeds. Evil things are without merit or weight. (weightless) The weight of all good things will be added and given increased value.

"And He accepts the prayers of those who believe and do good works, and grants them more out of His Grace." (42: 27)

If the scales are light, one has been unsuccessful. If the scales are heavy, it is an indication of success.

"And we set a just balance for the day of Resurrection, so that no *nafs* is wronged in the slightest. Even as it may be the weight of a grain of a mustard seed, we bring it forth." (21:48)

"Then as for him whose scales are heavy (with good works), he will live a pleasant life. But as for him whose scales are light, the Bereft and Hungry one will be his mother. Ah, what will convey to you what she is! Raging fire. (101:7-12)

Equity of Recompense

"Lo! This life of the world is but a passing comfort, and lo! The Hereafter is the enduring home. Whoever does an ill deed, he will be repaid the like thereof, while whoever does right, whether male or female, and is a believer, (all) such will enter the Garden." (40:40-41)

With regard to the Hereafter, individual responsibility and experience is given more emphasis. It is the individual who experiences death, the transition from the living world to the Hereafter: "Each *nafs* will taste of death." (3:186). The recompense awarded is also on the basis of the individual. Whether a man or woman, each is rewarded individually according to what he or she earns and there is a single scale of judgment.

So in the Qur'anic narrative recompense is acquired through actions performed by the individual before death.

"And Allah has created the heavens and the earth with truth, and each *nafs* may be repaid what it has earned. And they will not be wronged." (45:23)

No one can diminish the merits earned by another; neither can anyone increase them. No one can share in the merits achieved by another, nor in the punishment which will be given.

"And fear the day when no *nafs* will avail of another in the slightest, nor intercession be of use to it, nor will compensation be accepted from it, nor will they be helped." (2:49)

There is no possibility of gender discrimination on this subject as the Qur'an has been very explicit in addressing men and women separately and equally.

"And those who do good works, male or female, and is a believer, they shall enter the Garden." (4:125)

"Whoso acted righteously, male or female and is a believer, We shall surely grant them a pure life: and We shall surely bestow upon them their reward according to the best of their works. (16:98)

The Final Abode

The Qur'an acknowledges our earthly values and fears.

"We verily created humankind

and We know what his *nafs* whispers to him and We are nearer to him than his jugular vein." (50:17)

It states emphatically that Allah knows what is hidden and what is secret.

For those who disobey Allah and whose deeds were lighter, they will be placed in Hell.

"Woe unto the repudiators on that day! Depart unto that which you used to deny. Depart unto the shadow falling three fold. Which yet is no relief, nor shelter from the flame ... This is the day wherein they speak not. (77:29-32, 36)

Paradise

The Qur'an depicts Paradise in more exquisite details than other unseen phenomenon. In general, the depictions of Paradise are meant to entice the reader towards the afterlife. There are some forms given to the pleasures of Paradise which are specific to the audience at the time of the revelation, the desert dwellers of seventh century Arabia. Thus the appeals of the descriptions of 'gardens with rivers flowing beneath' is greater for someone living in an arid desert environment than, perhaps, for someone living in the tropics of Malaysia.

However, to confine the Qur'an to only that context would be incorrect. The Qur'an is from God, and not confined to or exhausted by one society or its history. Although the perspectives of the seventh century Arabs were given significant consideration in the Qur'an's modes of expressions, its eternal message is not limited to any single form of articulation. The values indicated by the text transcend the particular modes of expression. One must determine how those particulars are significant and express them in terms relevant to our own lives. Each new generation of Qur'anic readers must re-evaluate Qur'anic values and determine what they mean to them.

"And no *nafs* knows what supreme joy is hidden (awaiting) them, as a reward for their good works." (32:18)

Since Paradise and its pleasures are beyond human comprehension, the resemblance in these descriptions to pleasures experienced in this world must be taken analogously. First the Qur'an acknowledges the good (*khayr*) in some earthly things, like wealth, power, food, family status, offspring, and women.

"Beautified for mankind is love of the joys from women and offspring, and stored up heaps of gold and silver, and horses branded (with their mark), and cattle and land. That is the comfort of the life of the world. Allah! With Him is a more excellent abode. Say shall I inform you of something better than that? For those who keep from evil, with their Lord are gardens ... (3:15-16)

Zawj in the Hereafter

Among other pleasures of the Paradise, Qur'an describes companions for the believers. These companions have been the subject of great discussions among the Muslims as well as the non-Muslims.

The term *Hur-al-Ayn* meant something specific to the Arabs. She was so called because of her whiteness or fairness or cleanness. She was a woman of clear complexion and skin. The descriptions given are specific and sensual – youthful, virgin females with large dark eyes, white skin, and a pliant character. The specific depiction of the companions of Paradise demonstrates the Qur'an's familiarity with the dreams and desires of the Arabs. The Qur'an offers the *Hur* as an incentive to aspire after truth. It is notable that after the Makkan period, the Qur'an does not use the term *Hur* again. It describes the companions of the Paradise in generic terms.

"For those who keep from evil, with their Lord are gardens underneath which rivers flow, and pure *azwaj* and contentment from Allah. (3:16)

These believers are male and females and *azwaj* is a gender neutral term.

The Qur'anic use of 'you and your *azwaj*' with regard to the hereafter needs a closer look. First, the separation between good and evil takes precedence and the individual is recompensed only in accordance with his or her deeds.

"This is the day of separation, which you used to deny. Assemble those who did wrong, together with their *azwaj* and what they used to worship. (37:22-23)

Second to the Qur'an reminds us that only those who have done right will attain reward in Paradise, even if on earth they were related.

"Our Lord! And make them enter the Gardens of eternity which You have promised them, with such of their fathers and their *azwaj* and

their descendants as do right." (40:9)

Thus the use of 'you and your *azwaj*' means you and whoever is paired with you because of like nature, deeds, faith etc.

The emphasis then is on partnership, friendship, comfort, and harmony in Paradise, as opposed to the isolation, loneliness, and despair of Hell. Perhaps one might be reunited with his or her earthly spouse in Paradise, provided that the basis for the reunion is shared belief and good deeds.

Some commentators use the Qur'anic statements that there will be pure *azwaj* (i.e. plural) as an indication that a pious man will go to Paradise and will have multiple Hur for his pleasure. Indeed, it is a contradiction of terms that a pious man who practices self-constraint should have multiple erotic pleasures as his objective. The use of the plural *azwaj* corresponds to the use of the plural preceding it: for 'believers' (and such terms). The usage is meant to indicate that companionship awaits those who believe (men and women) in their attainment of Paradise – not that each man will get multiple wives.

Paradise offers a standard at an even higher level: the perspective of Allah. From this perspective, the greatest importance of Paradise is attaining peace, ending all want, transcending all earthly limitations and finally coming into the company of Allah. These highest pleasures are the same for female inhabitants of Paradise as for males. With regard to the eternal, both woman and man are equal in their potential to experience this highest transcendence. When Qur'an offers fulfillment of desire in Paradise, what is most important will be closeness to Allah.

So the Paradise is described to the Muslim subconscious: whatever pleasure you like, such will await you in Paradise – if you restrain yourself from over-indulgence, misuse and abuse here on earth. For the Arab patriarch, the primary audience of the Makkan period, it might be young virgin woman with white skin and large dark eyes. However, the Qur'an's descriptions of the companions of Paradise must be viewed on the basis of its entire teachings, social and moral.

Equality Before God

The Qur'an depicts human individuals as having inherently equal value by looking at three stages in human existence. First, in the creation of humans, the Qur'an emphasizes the single origin of all humankind. "He created you from a single soul." (4:2) Second, with regard to development here on earth, the Qur'an emphasizes that the potential for change, growth and development lies within the *nafs* of the individual (or the group) as well. "Allah does not change the condition of a folk until they (first) change what is in their *anfus* (plural of *nafs*)." (13:12) Finally, all human activity is given recompense on the basis of what the individual earns. (4:125)

The Qur'an does make distinctions between people. The value of the distinctions between humankind on earth can be clearly summed up by the Qur'anic statement in *Sura Al-Hujarat*, "We created you from male and female and have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed the most noble of you from Allah's perspective is whoever has the most *taqwa*." (49:14)

It is clear that the Qur'an does not assign a higher value to a human based upon gender. They are both considered partners (*Zawj*) of each other and a source of comfort for each other.

"And the believers, men and women, are friends of one another. They preach virtue and discourage evil. They observe *Salat*, pay zakat and obey Allah and His Messenger. It is these upon whom Allah will have mercy." (9:71)

****

HADITH

Hadhrat Nu'man bin Bashir[ra] relates that the Messenger[saw] of Allah said: "In respect to love for one another, and mercy and affection towards one another the Muslims are like a body. If a part of it becomes ill, the whole body becomes feverish and restless."

(Muslim kitabul birr walsilah bab tarahimul mu'minin wa ta'atifihum wa ta'a-diduhum)

Hadhrat Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari[ra] relates that the Messenger[saw] of Allah said: "The relationship between one believer and another is like that between different parts of a building, one part strengthens another. Then (to illustrate it) he gripped the fingers of one hand between those of the other."

(Bukhari kitabussalat bab tasbikul asa-bi' fil masjid, p 69/1)

PARTICIPATION IN 2013 NY BOOK EXPO

Shoeb Abulkalam, Secretary Publications, New York

The New York *Jama'at* participated in the Book Expo America in New York from May 30st - June 1st 2013, in a 3 days book exhibition where a splendid exhibition of the Holy Qur'an with translations in numerous languages along with books on Islam were displayed to the public. This noble inception bloomed from our beloved Hazoor's[aba] instruction from one of his Friday sermons where Hazoor[aba] has advised *Jama'at* members to propagate the message of Islam through displaying of the Noble Qur'an. The Book Expo was held in the heart of New York City, in Manhattan, in the Jacob Javits Center. This is the biggest 3 day "Book Expo America" exhibition and the largest publishing event in the whole of North America. Furthermore, it is exclusively a trade event with exhibitors engaged in distribution, sales, press and Public Relations along with rights business activity.

The overall attendance at the exhibition was 21,000+, representing 68+ countries where participants attended as independent booksellers, chain bookstores, retailers, librarians, editors, educators, literary agents and press, other nonprofit organizations, and religious organizations. The exhibition also had a significant media presence with over 1,750 individual press credentials. Exhibitors range from all of the largest publishing companies in North America to university presses, niche presses, digital book companies, independent publishers, gift companies and those companies who provide a service to the publishing industry.

This exhibition was an excellent networking and promotional opportunity for *Tabligh*. Our exhibition of the Holy Qur'an stall attracted curious participants who stopped by our stall (5'x10' square feet) and were astounded by the Holy Qur'an in over 65+ languages and commentaries. Even the Saudi Arabia's religious organization was thrilled as they paid a visit to our stall and showed special interest in the English commentaries of the Holy Qur'an. It is surprising that the Saudi Arabians had translations of the Holy Qur'an in only one language in their exhibition pavilion. Several other Islamic religious organizations were present also; Abu Dhabi, Oman, Dubai, Sharjah, Turkey, and United Arab Emirates organizations are few worth mentioning. Our online alislam bookstore catalog, Holy Qur'an mp3, Review of Religions, and pamphlets were distributed to the general public as well as the exhibitors. There were a few libraries from different parts of the country who showed interest to acquire our Qur'ans and books on Islam for their libraries. A company from Singapore plans on marketing our Qur'ans in Singapore, while a Korean company plans to procure our Qur'an in Korean language for marketing purpose. There was also a publisher who is situated in Queens whoshowed great interest in receiving copies of the Holy Qur'an in the Japanese language as they are writing books on Islam in Japanese. Oman exhibitors were very pleased to see our Holy Qur'an translated into 70+ languages as their bookstall was right next to ours and showed much respect to us throughout the three days course; they offered us their comfortable chairs which we used throughout the event.

Alhamdulillah we were blessed with some of our tenacious *Jama'at* members who stood on their feet for hours and distributed our *Jama'at* literature, engaged in conversation with exhibitors who stopped by our stall, and visited every single stall to give the message of Islam Ahmadiyyat. Nayeem Buyiyaan, Aslam Ali, Ahmad Mubarak, Abdul Ghafoor, Rafi Ahmed, Shoeb Abulkalam, and Ahmad Chaudhry Sahib were those members who participated in the Book Expo. Ahmad Chaudhry sahib have recorded clips and taken photos of this program. Our J*ama'at* President Nazir Ayaz Sahib is specially to be thanked for his effort to make all the necessary arrangements for this Book Expo and then spending whole days almost full time on our stall and serving the visitors.

Imam Daud Hanif Sahib joined us as well and really played a key role in engaging conversation with other religious organizations and spreading the message of Ahmadiyyat across. *Imam* Sahib introduced our bookstall to the Saudi Arabian official who stopped by our stall and gave information about our service to the Holy Prophet[saw] and the Holy Qur'an. He showed keen interest in

the Commentary of the Qur'an also.

Our stall had a display of beautiful posters, and our finest *Jama'at* books along with the display of the Holy Qur'an in numerous languages. We did not have sufficient funds to have a bigger size stall so visitors did not have enough room to walk around and see our stall (5'x10'). *Insha Allah* we hope to have a bigger stall next time so we can draw more attention and display all the translated languages of the Holy Qur'an in the stall. Special effort was made by Abdul Ghafoor Sahib, Secretary *Tabligh* of New York *Jama'at*. He systematically visited almost every stall in the Expo and presented their representatives with the catalog, pamphlets, and our contact address which contained our internet information. He also gave the DVD of the English translation which was prepared for the occasion to those who desired it. Also Omar Naseer, and Maaz Ahmed helped in setting up the book stall. Also we are grateful to Aslam Ali and Muzammil Jamil for their support with transportation and mobilization. Everyone sacrificed their time and effort with pleasure and with great efficiency. We are also thankful to Mubarak Jamil Sahib for providing us with the carpet.

Alhamdulillah this was a joint effort from the whole of the New York Metro region and this was a great success for us all. We plan to hold a similar bookstall during the month of June in Manhattan called the NY Book Festival, and in July in Harlem, called the Harlem book fair, where we will be able to sell books to the general public. We are requesting for prayers. *Ameen.*

Conference on Muhammad^{saw} – A Messenger of Peace

Saiyed Kaashif A. Qaderi, Chicago West Jama'at

In order to thwart the extremely slanderous and derogatory campaign launched in the West against Islam and the Holy Prophet^{saw}, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} had directed the *Jama'at* to hold conferences throughout the USA, in all 73 chapters, to highlight the Holy Prophet Muhammad's^{saw} message of peace and tolerance. *Muhtarram* Naseem Mahdi Sahib, *Na'ib Ameer* and Missionary in Charge, spearheaded the effort. Extensive preparations were made and several teleconferences were held. Detailed instructions were given regarding the format, content and schedule of the program. After the Chicago West *Aamila's* approval, we chose March 5th, 2013 for this conference. Under the leadership of Dr. Masood Qazi, President Chicago West, several teams were organized (i.e. *Tabligh* Security, Public Affairs, *Ziafat*, Audio/Visual, Registration, etc). On multiple occasions, and many weekends, teams of *Atfal, Khuddam, Ansar,* and *Lajna* braved the cold winter weather, visited neighbors, colleges, and churches distributing flyers and invitations. More than 1200 invitations were handed out or sent out. We had established good contacts with the media who were kept abreast of all the developments.

Because of a major snow storm, we had to reschedule the event on April 6th, 2013. The event started promptly at 4:00 PM. The agenda and the guidelines, according to directions from *Markaz*, were followed. After introductory remarks by Haris Ahmed Sahib, a documentary regarding the Ahmadiyya Community was shown, followed by a *Qaseeda* by Atfal. Dr. Masood A. Qazi, President of Chicago West, then delivered a speech, and highlighted the Holy Prophet's^{saw} message of peace, harmony, and tolerance, in the light of the teachings of the Holy Qur'an. This was a comprehensive dissertation and extremely well received by the audience. A video documentary of the noble work and accomplishments of Humanity First then followed.

A lively Q & A session, lasting about 45 minutes, then ensued. The panel consisted of Dr. Masood Qazi, President Chicago West, Munim A. Naeem, *Na'ib Ameer* Sahib, and Brother Abdul Karim, President Chicago East. The questions were probing and, at times, contentious, but the well-versed panelists did a superb job. Guests later on commented on how they found the Q & A session extremely enlightening and edifying. Guests then lingered afterwards and continued to engage us in further discourse. Refreshments were enjoyed by everyone. Some of the guests were given a tour of the mosque by Dr. Masood A. Qazi. *Alhumdullilah*, the meeting was very well attended by about 300 people, including over 50 guests. Each guest received literature and a special gift bag as prescribed by the *Markaz*. May Allah *Ta'ala* place countless blessings in all of our efforts. May this *Jama'at* continue to progress in all spheres while under the command and leadership of our beloved *Imam*^{aba}. *Ameen.*

BRIEF REPORT ON THE 30th MAJLIS SHURA, USA 2013

Syed Sajid Ahmad, Fargo ND

The proceedings of the 30th Annual National *Shura* (advisory council meeting) of *Jama'at* Ahmadiyya USA was held at the Baitur-Rahman Mosque in Silver Spring, MD, from April 26-28. Delegates from the US *Jama'ats* traveled from all over the country to attend the meeting. The meeting was held in the *Lajna* Hall at the mosque. Meals were arranged in the *Ansar* Hall. Many members stayed at the mosque while many were accommodated by local members in their homes. The weather remained pleasant during these days.

Dr. Ahsanullah Zafar, *Ameer Jama'at* Ahmadiyya USA, presided the first session on Friday, April 26, 2013. The session started at 3 P.M. in the afternoon with the recitation from the Holy Qur'an by Missionary Inamul Haq Kauser. The *Ameer* US led the delegates in prayers before the start of the proceedings. Members confirmed the minutes of proceedings of the last *Majlis Shura*. Next, the elections of National *Majlis Amila* for the term 2013-2016 were conducted by Missionary-in-Charge Naseem Mahdi, Missionary in Charge USA. Before the election, the audio of the *Khutbah* of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} about the directives of the Holy Qur'an about regarding the election of officers was played and its English summary was projected simultaneously on a large screen for members' benefit. Missionary in Charge Naseem Mahdi led members in prayers that the delegates follow the instruction of the Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} in electing the *Jama'at* officers. He explained the procedure for election. Delegates suggested names and then voted as required.

In his comments, the *Ameer* US asked the members as to what the US *Jama'at* can do to be even more effective in the United States. People know that what happened in Boston is not Islam. People are not listening anymore. People know Islam is not violent. What is the next message which will be heard.

Next, it was pointed out that proposals submitted but were not included for discussion in *Shura* deliberation are contained in the *Shura* documents with the reasons for not inclusion. comments, if any, were solicited of members about the proposals not included for *Shura* discussion. Next, proposals approved for *Shura's* deliberations were presented by Masoud Malik as well as the financial budget for 2013-2014 by Mirza Naseer Ehsan Ahmad. Subcommittees were formed for discussion on *Shura* items. After dinner and *Maghrib* and *Isha* Prayers subcommittees met to deliberate on the proposals and to prepare their recommendations for presentation to the general body of the *Shura*. Some of the subcommittee meetings continued past midnight. Remaining preparations of subcommittees took place in during the next morning.

On Saturday April 27, 2013, a *non-Shura* session started at 10 AM, presided by *Na'ib Ameer*, Dr. Nasim Rehmatullah. A discussion of issues concerning interaction between local and national officers was moderated by Muhammad Ahmad Chaudhry.

Dr. Col. Fazal Ahmad provided an update on the project of history of Ahmadiyyat in the US.

Dr Lutfur-Rahman apprised delegates of their plans to establish free clinics across the US and presented the details of the operation of the first such clinic established in Section AL. Humanity First and the Ahmadiyya Medical Association will organize and arrange the related work.

Nasir Malik led a discussion on the activation and involvement of non-active Ahmadis.

Waseem Malik moderated a discussion on the need and importance of National Mosque Fund Collection. Missionary-in-Charge Naseem Mahdi, Mansoor Qureshi and Waseem Syed presented their experiences and thoughts on the subject and gave examples of past exceptional sacrifices of members in the respect.

The second session started after lunch and *Zuhr* and *Asr* Prayers with recitation from the Holy Qur'an by Missionary Syed Shamshad Nasir. Election for the *Ameer* was conducted again under the directive of the Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} to assure correct tally of votes. The election was conducted by Missionary-in-Charge Naseem

Mahdi. He led members in prayers before the election.

Hasan Hakeem presented implementation report of last *Majlis Shura's* Decisions about *Tabligh*, Nasir Malik about *Tarbiyat*, Dr Farooq Padder about *Rishta Nat*a and Dr Faheem Yunus about *Talim* involvement of youth.

Next, secretaries presented annual reports of activities of for 2012-2013.

The office of General Secretary (Dr Masoud Malik) organized 2012 Shura; arranged and conducted five face-to-face *Amila* meetings, one through phone and one with the Khalifatul Masih; prepared the 2011-12 annual report; designed and put in place a master reporting system; the 2013 calendar was prepared; arranged for the verification of asylum, *Tajnid* and *Mulaqat* applicants; arranged a refresher course for *Jama'at* office bearers.

The Finance Department (Naseer Ehsan Ahmad) reported receipts greater than budget and proposed a budget with significant increase over the last year. He provided chapter by chapter and item by item details of all income heads and expenses.

The office of *Tabligh* (Hasan Hakeem) held a very successful first Annual *Tabligh* Conference; has prepared 53 exhibitions on the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet[saw] which are circulating among *Jama'ats*; readied nationwide African American Journey to Islam Exhibition; managed social media efforts @naseemmahdi, #MyMuhammad,MuhammadFactCheck.org and MuslimsForPeace.org; is conducting periodic campaigns throughout the year as follows:

a) Jan to March, "I Love Muhammad (sa)"
b) "Muslims for Loyalty" in July,
c) "Muslims for Life" in August – September, and
d) "Muslims for Peace" in December – January timeframe. Next will be to phase in the "Peace through the Messiah" campaign, *Insha Allah*. One thousand copies of paperback Holy Qur'an have been distributed all across the US for free.

The *Tarbiyat* Department (Nasir Malik) reported that the pre-marital counseling (PMC) process was rolled-out to all *Jama'ats*. More than 1,200 members attended 10 *Tarbiyat* workshops. In 2012 eight *Tarbiyat* Camps were held.

The Education Department (Dr. Faheem Yunus) reported that the education database allows to search over 2000 Ahmadi US students according to their level of education. The newsletter, "In The Know" reaches over 3000 *Jama'at* members, every two weeks. A total of 20 career planning videos have been uploaded on the *Ta'lim* YouTube channel. The *Ta'lim* active Twitter handle has over 700 followers. Eighteen African American students received the Munir Hamid and Muzaffar Zafar Scholarships. This represents a ten-fold increase in the number of minority applicants. Over 25 Graduation Days were held in 2012. The Education department shipped over 400 plaques for graduating students in different *Jama'ats*. Guidance counseling events were held at the National *Jalsa Salana* and the West Coast *Jalsa,* along with local events at over a dozen *Jama'ats*. Over 500 students benefited.

The Audio Video Department (Dr Nasim Rehmatullah) reported that MTA is now available on Roku and a new MTA Box. *Majlis Ansarullah* USA distributed 578 copies of Ahmadiyya programs for playing on local cable channels. 1043 audio Q&A (Ask Islam) clips are available online, more than 100 hours of the audio books of the Promised Messiah[as] and 7112 Programs comprising 4760 hours registered 4,482,576 views. Al-*Tarteel* lessons videos (http://www.alislam.org/v/c-8.html) have been made available on *Al-Furqan* Website. *Roohani Khazain* are now searchable.

Matrimonial Matters Department (Dr Farooq Padder) reported activities concerning matrimonial affairs.

Umur Kharijiyya Department (Amjad Mahmood Khan) reported that more than 2,200 high level officials were contacted during the year. Over 130 dignitaries, including 30 members of U.S. Congress (including Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi and U.S. Senator Robert Casey) attended special reception to honor the Khalifatul Masih V[aba]. On the 3rd Annual "Day on the Hill" (February 15, 2013) 77 delegates from 61 Chapters participated in 391 total meetings with U.S. Congressional offices (House/Senate), including over 60 direct meetings with members of U.S. Congress at Capitol Hill in D.C. 92 delegates from 61 chapters attended the 7th Annual National Public Affairs Seminar (February 16-17). Special Capitol Hill blood drives for "Muslims for Life" were scheduled on 9/10/12 (Rayburn) and 9/13/12 (Cannon) in partnership with the American Red Cross. There were over 120 donors, including 5 members of U.S. Congress.

12 different media outlets covered the drives, including New York Times, Washington Post, ABC, CBS, FOX and NPR. 84 individual meetings were held with over 35 organizations, including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Becket Fund for Religious Liberty; U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, American Islamic Congress, Hudson Institute, Middle East Institute, Muslim Advocates, Muslim Public Affairs Council, Council on American-Islamic Relations. 94 of 96 Ahmadi Muslims in detention were released on bail in June 2011 in Thailand have now been approved by the U.S. Government for resettlement (and all but one family have now arrived in United States). The National PA Team has worked on the issue of the persecution of Ahmadi Muslims in Saudi Arabia, Libya, Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, India and Bangladesh per *Tabshir's* guidance; met U.S. State Department Desks.

Umūr 'Āmma Department (Shahid Malik) reported that 502 persons received benefits in the shape of money, food and medicine, etc. 5967 homeless received food. Two schools were adopted and provided school supplies. 22 refuges received help.

Diyafat Department (Amjad Chaudhry) reported that it has two week of raw-food supply stored in Baitur-Rahman Mosque. *Diyafat* Department is continually improving kitchen facility. Baitur-Rahman Mosque renovated old *Langar Khana* that can be used in case of Emergency.

The *Wasaya* Department (Khaled Ahmad Ata) reported that currently there are more than 45% or the earning members are *Musis* (have pledged to contribute 10% of their income for the sake of Islam).

The Property Department (Daud Ahmad) reported that there are 97 Ahmadiyya properties in the US with 56 zoned as mosques. There are still 15 Jama'ats with no owned facility. Last year additional properties were acquired in Baltimore, Richmond, VA, Dayton, OH and Saint Louis, MO. Building activities continue in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Minnesota. Planning/ design works underway for construction of new mosques in Boston, MA, Bay Point CA, Dallas and Silicon Valley, CA. Mosques were completed recently in N. Va and Dayton. Additional acquisition activities are going on in Philadelphia, New Orleans, S. Virginia, and Chicago, IL.

The *Waqf Nau* Department (Hafiz Samiullah Chaudhary) reported 912 *Waqifin-i-Nau* in the US with 12 studying in *Jami'a*. Three separate events were held with the Khalifatul-Masih V^{aba} during his trip to the USA. The English translation of the *Waqf-i-Nau* Syllabus has been published.

The *San'at-o-Tijarat* Department (Khurram Ahmad) reported helping in professional development, job-hunting and developing business ideas.

The *Zara'at* Department (Mujeebullah Chaudhary) reported that vegetable gardens have been established at Baitur Rahman Mosque, Philadelphia Mosque, Baituz-Zafar Mosque-NY and Baitul Hameed Mosque in Chino-CA.

History and exhibition department (Fazal Ahmed) reported that the history committee is working on reviewing and publishing the manuscript compiled by the history department and the international offices have been provided historical details they requested of the history department. A large exhibition was arranged at the Annual Convention.

The Media Department (Waseem Malik) reported holding two training sessions. The department issued 14 press releases The Media team provided 35 custom media lists to various *Jama'ats* and officials. The department made more than 1700 phone calls regarding various campaigns. There were 361 media coverage instances.

The *Ta'limul-Qur'an* and *Waqf Ardi* department (Zaheeruddin Mansoor Ahmad) presented a view of their year round efforts to spread the knowledge of Qur'an.

The *Tahrik Jadid* Department reported that in 2012, contributions from 10,306 members amounted to $1.912 million with per participant contribution of $185.

The *Waqf Jadid* Department (Waseem Sayed) reported that in 2012, contributions from 10,574 members amounted to $1,468,730 with per participant contribution of $139.

Humanity First (Munum Naeem) reported humanitarian work in the US and outside. In the Water for Life program, hand pumps have been installed in Ghana, Liberia, Mali and Tanzania; water wells in Guatemala, Pakistan and Tanzania; and a water filtration plant in Pakistan. In educational programs, new schools have been built in

Haiti and Mali, and school supplies have been provided in Liberia, Ghana, Tanzania and USA. Under vocational training programs, computer, language and sewing training centers have been established in Guatemala, Liberia, and Mali. Healthcare and medical outreach program has carried out missions and support in Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Liberia, Pakistan, Panama and Tanzania. Feed the family and food bank programs have been carried out in the US through food pantries and soup kitchens. Disaster relief programs were carried out in the US and in Gaza last year.

Next the subcommittees presented their recommendations. Munum Naeem presented the report of the *Tabligh* subcommittee, Sahibzada Mirza Maghfoor Ahmad that of *Tarbiyat.* The *Shura* body openly discussed these subcommittees recommendation.

Proposals were accepted with the appropriately applicable comments from the delegates. In his comments, the *Ameer* asked the members to stay with the children, pray with the children and pray about their future.

Dinner and *Maghrib* and *Isha* Prayers followed the session.

The third and the last session started at 10 AM on Sunday April 28, 2013 with the recitation from the Holy Qur'an by Missionary-in-Charge Naseem Mahdi. The presentation of subcommittee reports and open discussion continued with the presentation of finance by Ehsan Naseer Ahmad followed by comments and questions by delegates and responses by the *Jama'at* officers. The *Shura* ended around noon with concluding remarks from the *Ameer* and prayers.

KINDS OF FASTS

The Holy Qur'an and *Hadith* refer to different kinds of fasts which can be divided into two classes:

1. Obligatory fasts. 2. Voluntary fasts.

Obligatory Fasts

a) i. Prescribed fasts in the month of *Ramadan.*
ii. Omitted fasts of *Ramadan* which must be undertaken.

b)
i. Fast for atoning *Zihar."(Zihar: Uttering something which has the effect of a divorce; Saying to wife 'you are like a mother to me').*
ii. Fast for atoning unintentional murder.
iii. Sixty consecutive fasts as penalty for breaking a pre scribed fast intentionally.
iv. Atonement fast for breaking an oath.
v. Fasting to honor a voluntary pledge of fast.
vi. Fast associated with *Hajj-e-Tammatt'a* and *Hajj-e-Qiran.*
vii. Penalty fasts for hunting in state of *Ihram.* .
viii. Penalty fasts for shaving head in state of *Ihram.*

Voluntary Fasts

i. Six fasts in the month of *Shawwa-l. (These fasts are kept starting on 2nd Shawwal, i.e., the day after the 'Idul Fitr).*
ii. Fast on the Day of *'Ashura. (on 10th of the month of Muharram).*
iii. Fast observed by Prophet *Dawud* (David) - *i.e., fasting on alternate days.*
iv. Fasting on the Day of *'Arafa* (*on 9th Dhul Hijjah*).
v. Fasting on 13th, 14th and 15th day of every lunar month of Islamic calendar.
vi. Fasting any other time besides the forbidden times.

Prohibited Days

Fasting is prohibited on the following days/occasions:

i. *'Idul Fitr* (1st *Shawwal*).
ii. *'Idul Adhiyya* (10th *Dhul Hijjah*).
iii. *Tashriq* Days (11th, 12th and 13th *Dhul Hijjah*).

Source: Welcome to Ahmadiyyat, the True Islam book

****

A LETTER TO MR. IMRAN KHAN

Tahmina Ahmad

Dear Imran Khan Sahib,

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullah,

I write to you today being a Pakistani. I write to you today being a Muslim. I write to you today being an Ahmadi (Qadiani). We are Muslims. We believe in the exalted status of the Holy Prophet[saw], we believe in the Holy Qur'an to be the last word of Allah. We practice Islam. First and foremost, I would like to congratulate you on the success of your election campaign and pray to Allah that he give you success in these upcoming elections. I have always been a fervent supporter of *Tehreek-e-Insaf.* I believed that the ideals of PTI were based on the ideals of justice and equality. I believed that these were the ideals you would embody when you lead Pakistan into a new era. Finally had some hope that Pakistan would have a leader equivalent in greatness and demeanor to that of Quaid-e-Azam, who would lead Pakistan to the great country that it once was. Alas, I have been disappointed thoroughly.

Your claims on May 1st, 2013 regarding Ahmadi Muslims as non-Muslims have thoroughly shaken us to the core. I finally believed that Pakistan could have a leader that was just. The Ahmadi Muslims have suffered inhumane persecution by the hands of corrupt politician. The government has been justifying these acts of inhumanities on the "ordinance" passed by Bhutto and Zia. The Ahmadi Muslims have never retaliated in these many years. Not only have we been a peaceful community that have participated in major acts of humanity throughout the years, but we have also been a catalyst in the peaceful spreading of Islam. Islam by definition means peace and submission. The Ahmadiyya Community in Islam has exemplified time and time again the true definition of Islam. Yet, the *Mullahs*, corrupt politicians and now you have labeled us as Non-Muslim. The Ahmadiyya community has suffered major persecutions and not retaliated violently, yet we are the ones that are termed non-Muslim? What hypocrisy is this?

If you are ignorant of the fact that the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has given the Holy Prophet[saw] the utmost importance and respect, then you need to do some reading. Being in the position you are, it does not look good in your favor if you continue to make ignorant statements about the status of the Holy Prophet[saw]. Alislam.org is a good tool to gain this information. This will give you a complete knowledge and show you that this *Jama'at* has given the Holy Prophet[saw] the status of *Khatamun-Nabiyeen*, the Seal of the Prophets. One of the many examples of the exalted status of the Holy Prophet[saw] in this peaceful *Jama'at* can be found in the 100 Arabic couplets written by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian[as] known as the *Qaseedah* which were written in the praise and extreme love for the Holy Prophet[saw]. Yet, the corrupt politicians, *Mullahs* and the corrupt government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan have termed the Ahmadi Muslims as *Kaafir*. We are denied the *Adhan*, we are denied the *kalma*, we are jailed for practicing our religion. Yet, the Ahmadis have still shown the utmost love for Pakistan and still pray for its well-being. The Holy Prophet[saw] has said that "Love for your country, is a part of faith."

The reason for the success of the United States of America where I reside is because of its ideals of freedom of religion, freedom of speech and holding humanity to a very high standard. Pakistan's successful future lies in the hands of a secular state. One which grants freedom of speech, religion, and equality. One where the constitution of the country itself does not promote violence against Muslim minorities. The success of Pakistan lies in the hands of its people. Above everything we are all Pakistanis, and we want to see a successful independent Pakistan that is not dependent on the mercy of US aid. But unless we can find a way to guarantee people their natural rights such as life and liberty, as outlined by Thoreau and Locke, Pakistan can not become that great country that we have known it to be. The success of Pakistan lies in equality and a secular state combined with true *Shariah.*

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a community which practices Islam in its purest form. I have truly exemplified the meaning of being a Muslim in this world. I believed

that you, Imran Khan, would usher Pakistan into a new era of justice and equality. My hopes were shattered when I saw that (under the influence of the *Mullahs*) you have turned out to be the same as every other politician that ruled over Pakistan. I thought you could bring change that was much needed in Pakistan. Unfortunately, it seems that you have surrendered to the will of the *Mullahs* instead of standing your ground. Allah helps those who stand up against injustice. We fervently pray to Allah for the well-being of Pakistan and *Insha Allah* that day is not far when the truth about Ahmadiyyat will illuminate the hearts of those who are blinded by the false accusations and propaganda against this peaceful *Jama'at*.

I wish you the best of luck in your upcoming elections. May God enlighten you and give you the ability to guide Pakistan in the right direction.

Jazakallah.

Khuda Hafiz,

Tahmina Ahmad

****

PAY ZAKAT

****

UNITED FOR PEACE

Alejandra Girón, Secretary

On June 1 of this year, the first interfaith symposium organized by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of Guatemala was held at Baitul Awal Mosque, located at kilometer 20.3 of the Inter-American Highway, about the topic *Answers for the Establishment of Peace*. Representatives of the Baha'i Faith and representatives of the Maya Spirituality were present, as well as representatives of Islam. The exhibitors explained how their faith promotes world peace, and the participants asked questions to the different exhibitors, who devoted special time to answer them.

When interviewed, the *Imam* and *Ameer* of Guatemala, Abdul Sattar Khan, said that "this is the first of a series of activities that the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of Guatemala will conduct in order to create and promote tolerance and peace in our country". The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of Guatemala will continue with these activities in the hopes that representatives of other religions will also participate in the next symposium.

******

SAN DIEGO JAMA'AT MEMBERS MEET THE MAYOR

Dr. Tahir Ijaz

On June 6, 2013 the San Diego *Jama'at* delegation met with San Diego Mayor Bob Filner. San Diego is the second largest city in California and the 8th largest city in USA.

We discussed the history of our community and reviewed our community initiatives with him such as Muslims for Life, Humanity First and interfaith symposia. We gave him some literature including Hazoor's talk on Capitol Hill last year (which really interested him), and recent Wall Street Journal article in May 2013 which featured our *Jama'at*. We extended an invitation to him to attend July 4 independence day celebrations our local Jama'at will arrange. He also appreciated our Muslims for Loyalty campaign.

******

Names of National Amila USA Approved for 2013-16

1.	Amir	Dr. Ahsan Ullah Zafar
2.	General Secretary	Dr. Zaheer Ahmad Bajwa
3.	Secretary Tabligh (Preaching)	Hassan Hakeem
4.	Secretary Tarbiyyat (Religious Training)	Dr. Faheem Younus Qureshi
5.	Secretary Talim (Education)	Nasir Mahmood Malik
6.	Secretary Isha'at (Publication)	Syed Sajid Ahmad
7.	Secretary Isha'at Sam'I wa Basri (A/V)	Dr. Nasimullah Rehmatullah
8.	Secretary Umur Kharijiyya (Public Affairs)	Amjad Mahmood Khan
9.	Secretary Umur 'Amma (Social Affairs)	Shahid Saied Malik
10.	Secretary Diyafat (Hospitality)	Dr. Mohammad Amjad Chaudhry
11.	Secretary Mal (Finance)	Mirza Naseer Ehsan Ahmad
12.	Additional Secretary Mal (Finance)	Saad Ahmad Mian
13.	Secretary Wasaya (Wills)	Dr. Khaled Ahmad Ata
14.	Secretary Talimul Quran & Waqf 'Ardi	Dr. Zaheeruddin Mansoor Ahmad
15.	Secretary Tahrike Jadid	Anwer Mahmood Khan
16.	Secretary Waqfe Jadid	Waseem Ahmad Sayed
17.	Additional Secretary Waqfe Jadid	Abu Bakr
18.	Secretary Ja'idad (Properties)	Dr. Mir Daud Ahmad
19.	Secretary Waqfe Nau	Dr. Hafiz Sami Ullah Chaudhary
20.	Secretary Agriculture	Nasir Saeed Malik
21.	Secretary Sanat-o-Tijarat (Industry & Trade)	Faysal Adeel Sohail
22.	Muhasib (Accountant)	Khurram Bashir
23.	National Amin (Treasurer)	Bashir Ahmad Malik
24.	National Auditor	Falahud Din Shams

BELIEF MATTERS – ISLAM AND CONTEMPORARY MUSLIMS

Rafi Ahmed, Ph.D.

Prologue

In modern times, the Muslim world has not been a picture of probity and harmony. There have been numerous internal conflicts: the secession of Bangladesh from Pakistan, Black September in Jordan, the Iran-Iraq war, the Algerian civil war of the 1990s, and the Darfur pogrom. "The events of 1971-2 in East Pakistan exhibited the shameful spectacle of Muslims practicing every form of barbaric savagery upon Muslims and non-Muslims. Humanity and Islam were besmirched, dishonored and disgraced by the actions of Muslims", wrote Hadhrat Zafrulla Khan [1]. Mannan Asif of Columbia University recently lamented the egregious persecution of Ahmadis in Pakistan and attributed it to a tyrannical majority and its total disregard for the rights of minorities [2].

Extremism, misogyny, and intolerance continue unabated in that part of the world. Nevertheless, on occasion, some Ahmadis -- with a blurred distinction between Islam and its followers – feel obliged to rationalize these acts and beliefs. But that is an exercise in futility, since one cannot defend the indefensible.

Behind the glaring moral failures in the Muslim world lies a belief system that is often at odds with the ethical and doctrinal principles of the Holy Qur'an. In this essay, we will take a look at this belief system.

Human Rights

The Holy Qur'an contains the foremost declaration of universal human rights. The broad values and standards laid down by Islam endorse the spirit and purposes of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as elucidated in the book, *Islam and Human Rights*, by Hadhrat Zafrulla Khan [3].

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 1948. It contains the broadest consensus of contemporary civilization on the subject of human rights. The UDHR contains all the important traditional political and civil rights, such as equality before the law; the right to a fair trial; the right to own property; freedom of opinion and expression; and freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. The UDHR Article 18 states:

> *Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.* [4]

Islam upholds freedom of conscience and thought and it teaches respect and tolerance for all religions, for the Qur'an majestically proclaims that there should be absolutely no compulsion or constraints in the matters of belief or *disbelief* [2:257].

Nonetheless, a common Muslim view is that the apostate – the one who held the faith of Islam and then leaves it – commits a crime when he renounces his faith. And according to an almost universal majority of Muslim jurists, the apostate must simply be put to death.

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul-Masih IV^{rh}, in his book [5], *Murder in the Name of Allah*, and in a speech [6], forcefully argues that though apostasy is a grave sin, the Qur'an does not consider it a crime and therefore prescribes no punishment for it.

Munir Commission Report

In 1953, there was a horrific anti-Ahmadi riot in Pakistan, where many Ahmadis suffered loss of life and property. A court of inquiry with Justices Muhammad Munir and Malik Kayani as members was established to look into the causes of this anti-Ahmadi riot. The court of inquiry's published its findings, which is commonly referred to as the Munir Commission Report [7]. This Commission based its investigation partly on written testimonies and cross-examinations of a wide array of prominent theologians in Pakistan. Topics such as the rationale for an Islamic State, minority rights in Islamic states, the rights of Muslims in non-Muslim states, jihad, apostasy, the definition of a Muslim, etc. were examined in great detail.

On the question of apostasy, the Munir Commission Report states, "Apostasy in an Islamic state is punishable by death. On this the *ulema* are practically *unanimous*. ... According to this doctrine, Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan, if he has not inherited his personal religious beliefs but has voluntarily elected to be an Ahmadi, must be put to death" (p. 218). The Report goes on to add that "the prohibition against public preaching of any non-Muslim religion must logically follow from the proposition that apostasy will be punished with death and that any attack on, or danger to Islam will be treated as treason punished in the same way as apostasy." (p. 221).

Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam

In 1990, more than fifty Muslim countries decided to offer a parallel declaration of an Islamic conception of human rights – as a *corrective* to the UDHR. With this objective, these Muslim countries, under the aegis of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, passed the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam [8], and thereby, the Muslim world came to a political consensus on certain issues of doctrinal matters.

According to Dr. Ann Mayer, the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam [CDHRI] considers the religious, civil and political rights in the Universal Declaration as excessive and applies Islamic *Sharia* to restrict and reduce them [9]. Needless to say, it is the Muslim jurists, who define the Islamic *Sharia*.

In the CDHRI, the rights of women and of freedom of religion stand out for their glaring limitations. Although the CDHRI prohibits forced religious conversion, it does not provide complete freedom of religion. The CDHRI Article 10 states:

> *Islam is the religion of true unspoiled nature. It is prohibited to exercise any form of pressure on man or to exploit his poverty or ignorance in order to force him to change his religion to another religion or to atheism.* [8]

The above is the *only* statement the CDHRI made about freedom of religion. This limited freedom of religion granted by the CDHRI stands in a stark contrast to the right granted by the Holy Qur'an or by Article 18 of the UDHR. The CDHRI refuses to give us the most fundamental of human rights – the freedom of conscience and the right to change one's religion or belief. The CDHRI is deafeningly silent about the right of a Muslim to renounce Islam in favor of any other religion or atheism, effectively banning apostasy. And consistent with their declaration, very few Muslim countries allow in their lands open missionary activities by non-Muslims. But this should come as no surprise to anyone; after all, the belief in death for apostasy and freedom of conscience cannot coexist.

Richard Dawkins, an Oxford evolutionary biologist and author, relates an interesting anecdote [10]. On British television, Dawkins asked a leading British moderate Muslim, Sir Iqbal Sacraine, about the death penalty as an Islamic punishment for apostasy. Sacraine quizzically stated that the issue was unimportant, although he did not decry or deny it. Ironically, Sacraine has been knighted by the British government for promoting good "interfaith relations"!

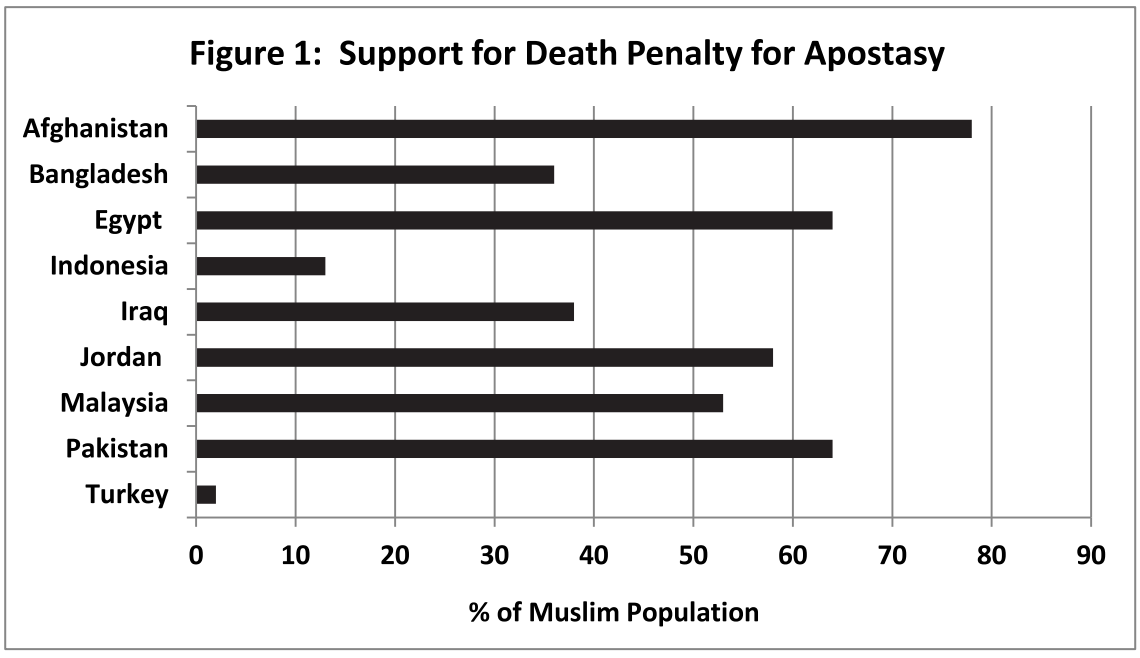
Pew Forum Report on Muslims

A sweeping 226-page recent report [11] from the Pew Forum explores the attitudes and opinions from Muslim countries around the world. The survey involved 38,000 face-to-face interviews in more than 80 languages with Muslims across the world. Unsurprisingly, there is a wide variety in the views held by Muslims in different communities. The findings do not represent all Muslims, as Pew unfortunately did not survey Muslims from India – the country with the world's third largest Muslim population – Iran, and Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless, the Pew report offers a comprehensive view of many of the world's largest Muslim communities and their opinions on a wide array of political, social, and religious subjects. Here we present responses to some critical questions for a number of Muslim countries.

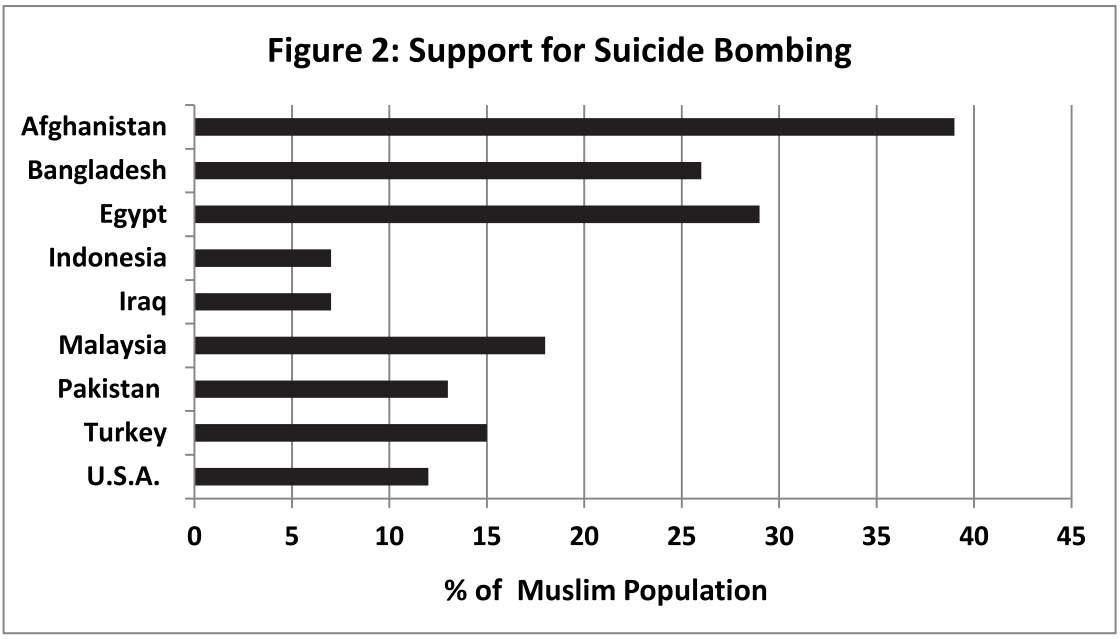
The survey [11] shows that Muslims tend to favor using *Sharia* in the domestic sphere. Intriguingly, Muslims differ widely on such questions as whether polygamy and divorce are morally acceptable and whether daughters should be able to receive the same inheritance as sons.

The death penalty for apostasy is supported by the majority in many Muslim countries [11], as is shown in Figure 1. For example, in Pakistan, a country not known for religious tolerance, 64% of the population favors [12] this punishment for apostasy.

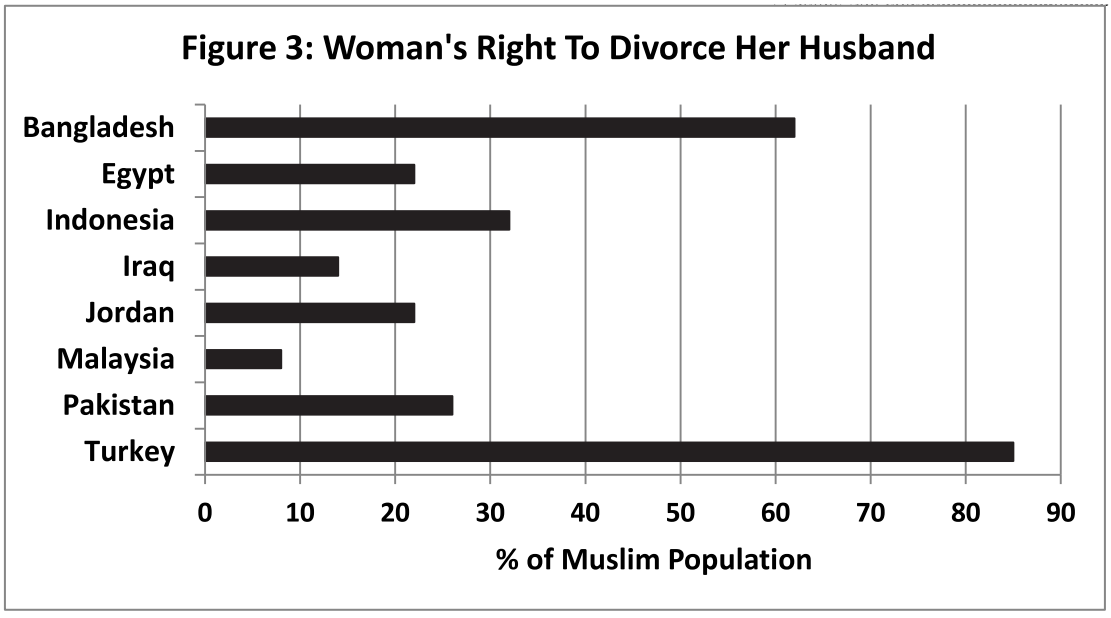
Perhaps in the early period of Islam when the Muslim State was still going through its birth pangs apostasy was considered a specific transgression known as *ridda*, a crime akin to treason [5]. This might explain why this punishment still persists, although now apostasy is nothing more than a "thought crime".



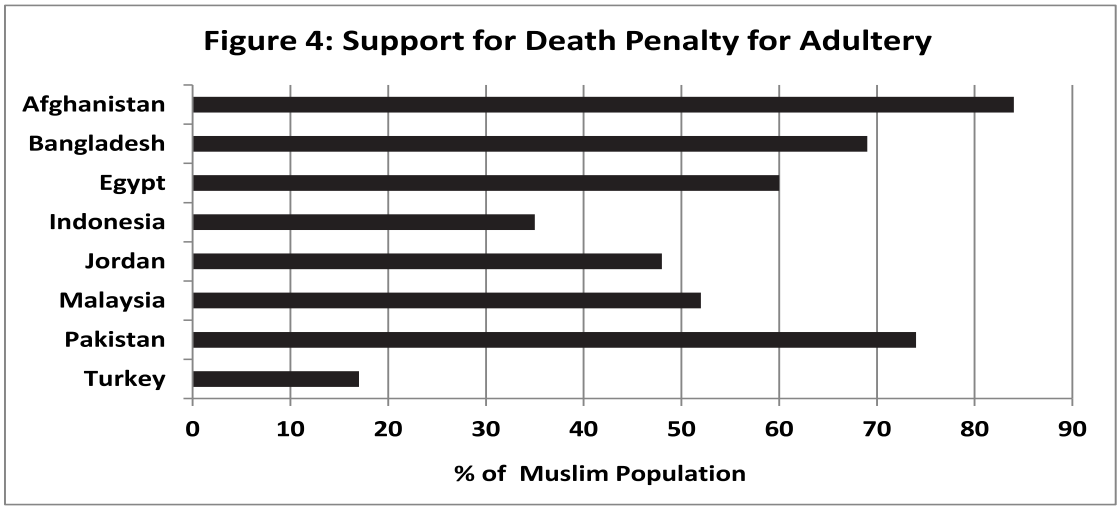
Most Muslims around the world reject suicide bombing [11]. Figure 2 presents the percentages of Muslim populations whose view is that suicide bombing and other forms of violence against civilian targets are sometimes justified in order to defend Islam from its enemies; for example, it shows that 12% of American Muslims think that such violence is sometimes justified. The survey found little correlation between attitudes towards violence and factors such as age, gender or education.



The Qur'an permits both husband and wife to seek the dissolution of marriage. All four Islamic theological schools – Hanafi, Shafi'i, Hanbali, and Maliki – recognize this right for both men and women. But surprisingly, the views of Muslims in many countries vary on this ostensibly non-controversial subject as shown in Figure 3. For example, only 12% of the population in Iraq believes that a woman has the right to divorce her husband.



The Qur'an does not prescribe the death penalty for either adultery or fornication. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community subscribes only to the punishment mentioned in the Qur'an for adultery or fornication (i.e., sex outside marriage). In contrast, an overwhelming majority of Muslim theologians over the ages have held the view that the non-Qur'anic death penalty is the prescribed punishment for adultery. Today Muslims in many countries also hold this view [11] as shown in Figure 4.



In most Muslim countries, where a question about the so-called "honor" killings was asked, only a minority of Muslims considered it justified [11]. Only in Afghanistan and Iraq, did majorities condone *extra-juridical* executions of women who allegedly had engaged in premarital sex.

Epilogue

Among contemporary Muslims, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is unique for the position it takes on many issues that have profound relevance in the world. It is the only Muslim Community, which – privately and publicly, individually and collectively, consistently and categorically – rejects extremism and intolerance. Arnold Toynbee, one of the most preeminent historians of our time, proposed two general categories of contemporary Muslims. Borrowing from Jewish history around the time of the Prophet Jesus[as], he labeled Muslims as either *Herodians* or *Zealots* [13]. According to him, the Herodian is the Westernized, indifferent, irreligious Muslim, whereas the Zealot is the puritanical, retrogressive, fundamentalist Muslim. Toynbee also alludes to the fact that the Ahmadis defy these rather extreme categories and observes that the Ahmadiyyas have great potential for developing into a leading, global spiritual movement.

References

1. Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, *The Agony of Pakistan*, Kent Publications, Oxford, U.K., 1974
2. M. A. Asif, *Pakistan's Tyrannical Majority*, The New York Times, May 10, 2013
3. Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, *Islam and Human Rights*, Islam International Publications, 1967
4. Universal Declaration of Human Rights: http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml
5. Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, *Murder in the Name of Allah*, Luttenworth Press, Cambridge, 1989
6. Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, *The Truth about the Alleged Punishment of Apostasy in Islam*, a speech delivered at Jalsa Salana, July 27, 1986
7. M. Munir and M. Kayani, *Report of the Court of Inquiry Constituted under Punjab Act II of 1954 to enquire into the Punjab Disturbances of 1953*, http://www.thepersecution.org/archive/munir/index.html
8. Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam: http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/cairodeclaration.html
9. Ann Elizabeth Mayer, *Universal Versus Islamic Human Rights: A Clash of Cultures or a Clash With a Construct*, Michigan Journal of International Law (15,307), 1994
10. Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 2006
11. *The World's Muslims: Religion, Politics and Society*, The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, April 2013, http://www.pewforum.org/Muslim/the-worlds-muslims-religion-politics-society.aspx
12. Max Fischer, *64 Percent of Muslims In Egypt and Pakistan Support the Death Penalty for Leaving Islam*, The Washington Post, May 1, 2013
13. Arnold Toynbee, *Civilization on Trial and the World and the West*, Meridian Books, 1967

Author: Rafi Ahmed is a computer scientist who has published over 25 research papers. He is the inventor of 18 U.S. patents. His articles have appeared in an engineering encyclopedia and database system text books. He has given invited talks at international conferences and academia. He serves as an assistant national education secretary of AMC, USA. His essays have appeared in the Ahmadiyya Gazette USA, the Review of Religions, and on www.alislam.org.

Top: Book Stall Organized by New York Jama'at at New York Book Expo Exhibition

Bottom: Members of San Diego Jama'at Meeting with San Diego Mayor, Bob Filner (third from right)

Interfaith Conference on 'World Peace' held by Guatemala Jama'at in Mixco, Guatemala

"MUHAMMAD: MESSENGER OF PEACE" CONFERENCE AT ST. MATTHEW CATHOLIC CHURCH, HALLANDALE BEACH, FL

Munawar Ahmad Chaudhry, President Miami Jama'at

Father James Quinn of St Matthew Catholic Church in Hallandale Beach first met Regional Missionary, *Imam* Muhammad Saeed Khalid and Mr. Munawar Chaudhry, President of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community-Miami at the National Day of Prayer Observance at the Hallandale Beach City Hall on May 2, 2013. During the course of the conversation, Father Quinn extended them an invitation to visit St Matthew Catholic Church. Further communication and meetings panned out to an event at the Church premises. The goal was to inform the congregation about Islam and its basic tenants. Father Quinn extended a hand of friendship towards Ahmadiyya Muslim Community because he felt the urgency to bring the peaceful message of Islam to his congregation—and fill the information gap that exists. The need to foster understanding between Muslims and Christians was never greater. The world is riddled with chaos and turmoil and the responsibility lies upon religious leaders to work towards peace in the society. Filling the information void is integral to fostering harmony and building bridges between faiths.

Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA'S nationwide "Muhammad: Messenger of Peace" campaign is an effort to educate Americans about the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw]. Miami had already hosted two very successful events in the month of March. It was befitting to hold the same at St Matthew as it offered a great opportunity to discuss contemporary issues relating to Islam and dispel the myths about Hadhrat Muhammad Mustafa[saw]. Thus the "Muhammad: Messenger for Peace" Conference was held on June 14, 2013.

The congregation of St Matthew mainly comprises of North Easterners who have a second home in South Florida. It was heartening to see the guests flock in as the time for the conference approached. The harsh weather and thunderstorms did not deter them; more than 100 people including 50+ members of St Matthews were seated as the event proceeded.

The program started with a recitation of the Holy Qur'an by Hafiz Muhammad Danial. It was followed by the translation that was delivered by Usama Chaudhry. Father James Quinn in his remarks talked about the efforts of various Catholic Popes in the past to foster harmony with Muslims. He reiterated that the quest must continue so that the two major faiths can shed the animosities of the past and work towards peaceful coexistence. A brief video introduction of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was presented. It was followed by the keynote speaker of the event Dr Taha Shaikh presented a comprehensive power point that addressed key facts about Islam, the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] and the contemporary issues such as Jihad, blasphemy, *Shariah* Law and women's rights.

An engaging Q&A session followed. There were many questions regarding the status of Prophet Jesus[as] and Hadhrat Maryam[as] in Islam. The panelist answered them succinctly and eloquently with pertinent references from the Holy Qur'an and examples from the life of the Holy Prophet[saw]. The unanimous feedback to the event was overwhelmingly positive. Guests were genuinely impressed with the quality of the presentation and some candidly admitted that they had never heard these amazing facts about Islam. Some said that their understanding about Islam was limited to its portrayal in the media and hoped that such interactive and positive sessions were highlighted as they are fundamental to showing the true face of Islam. Organizers of their summer school invited our children to revisit the church. The event concluded with the silent prayers and refreshments were served. Prayers are requested for Miami *Jama'at* that may Allah *Ta'ala* enable us to work tirelessly and steadfastly in the service of Islam Ahmadiyyat. May Allah enable us to pitch in our humblest efforts as we continue to spread the true, beautiful and peaceful message of Islam. *Ameen.*

TaQWA

Department of Taleemul Qur'an & Waqf-e-Ardhi
Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, USA

Alfurqan Update

(New Class of English Translation)

June 21, 2013

DEPARTMENT OF TALEEM-UL-QURAN and WAQF-E-ARDHI, JAMAAT AHMADIYYA, USA

AlTaQWA | Alfurqan FAQ

Summer Course: Learning English Translation of the Holy Qur'an

Alfurqan administration is honored to announce the start of English Translation Class in Summer of 2013. The details of thee class is as follows:

Basic Translation of the Holy Qur'an (BT03)

Teacher: Dr. Hameed Naseem
Teacher: Dr. B.K. Ahmad
Start Date: June 13, 2013
Days: Thursday, Friday, and Saturday
Time: 9:00 pm EST <> 6:00 pm PST
Session Information: It is a three month course based on Module 1 of English Translation of the Holy Qur'an. This course will cover basic pronunciation rules and split word translation of Surah Al-Fatiha and Surah Al-Baqarah with basic grammar. Short assignments will be given weekly to enhance learning.

Please visit www.alfurqan.us to enroll in the class. Along with the course information below, we are also linking a User's Manual Class_Join_in_Guide_for_Students.pdf.

For any further assistance, send us an email on admin@alfurqan.us or call us at (732) 734-4879.
*(Time may shift +30 to +90 minutes over the session depending on changes in sunset time and Daylight Saving Time.)

Alfurqan **aims to be the best online resource for learning the Holy Qur'an, inshallah, and it aims to motivate and enable Jama'at members in this learning by use of modern technology.**

www.alfurqan.us | admin@alfurqan.us | info@alfurqan.us

HIDDEN TREASURES OF THE HOLY QUR'AN

Shehla Ahmad, South Virginia

(This article has been compiled from selective extracts taken from "Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth" written by Khalifatul masih IV, Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (rh), Published by Islam International Publications Ltd., Surrey UK, (1998) p.586-605. It is highly recommended that the book itself is referred to in order to have a complete and in context understanding of the subject.)

(*Continued from the previous issue*)

The two verses quoted above are taken from two different Surahs of the Holy Quran. Each predicts a separate event of the joining of two different seas together. This is exactly what happened in modern times. In the digging of the Suez Canal during 1859–1869 and that of the Panama Canal during 1903–1914, the world has already witnessed the fulfillment of these prophecies in a manner that could not have been even vaguely visualized by man during the age of the Holy Prophet[sa].

The meaning portraying the seas as set ablaze is an idea which belongs to the age of huge oil spills such as occur in our time. They are often ignited to minimize the horrendous threat they pose to marine life. At such times even hundreds of thousands of square miles of sea can be observed as literally set on fire.

وَإِذَا النُّفُوسُ زُوِّجَتْ * 81:8

And when people are brought together.

This too can be translated simultaneously into three different meanings as follows:

1. When people will be linked together by mutually binding ties.
2. When people from all over the world will be merged together.
3. When the meeting of people together will be facilitated by means of much faster modes of transport.

Each of the three interpretations mentioned above has clearly come true. Ours is an age when international treaties bind practically all the nations of the world without exception. Hence, this interpretation has evidently come true and needs no further elaboration. Likewise, the founding of the League of Nations which was replaced later by the United Nations has evidently advanced the ultimate unification of the world a step further. As for the fulfillment of the third prophecy, we have already observed that travel time has been so reduced by new modes of transportation that it has created the impression that the whole world is squeezed into a global village.

Before proceeding further, it would be appropriate to mention another prophecy which also relates to the subject of the bringing together of people. That prophecy speaks of the return of the Children of Israel to the Promised Land in the latter days:

وَقُلْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ لِبَنِيٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ ٱسْكُنُوا۟ ٱلْأَرْضَ فَإِذَا جَآءَ وَعْدُ ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ جِئْنَا بِكُمْ لَفِيفًا * 17:105

And after him We said to the children of Israel, 'Dwell ye in the land; and when *the time of* the promise of the latter days comes, We shall bring you together r*out of various peoples*.

The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 by the Romans tolled the bell for the death of the Jewish state. From then on the Jews were scattered throughout the world moving on from country to country. It is this state of ultimate diaspora to which the above verse refers to when it declares that one day the Jews will be gathered from all over the world and once again they will be assembled in the Holy Land. It is a covenant of God which shall be fulfilled. We have already seen the fulfillment of this promise on such a wide scale as has never been witnessed by man before. Never in the history of the Jewish people after any diaspora were they brought back from all the countries of the world as it happened in the recent past after the creation of the state of Israel. The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 by the Romans tolled the bell for the death of the Jewish state. From then on the Jews were scattered throughout the world moving on from country to country. It is this state of ultimate diaspora to which the above verse refers to when it declares that one day the Jews will be gathered from all over the world and once again they will be assembled in the Holy Land. It is a covenant of God which shall be fulfilled. We have already seen the fulfillment of this promise on such a wide scale as has never been witnessed by man before. Never in the history of the Jewish people after any diaspora were they brought back from all the countries of the world as it happened in the recent past after the creation of the state of Israel.

وَإِذَا ٱلْمَوْءُۥدَةُ سُئِلَتْ * بِأَىِّ ذَنۢبٍ قُتِلَتْ * 81:9-10

And when the girl-child buried alive is questioned about, 'For what offence has she been put to death?'

No longer will men be able to trifle with the rights of women, is the powerful import of this verse. Never in any age did the rights of women acquire such importance as in contemporary times.

وَإِذَا ٱلصُّحُفُ نُشِرَتْ * 81:11

And when the books will be extensively published and spread.

The invention of the modern press is implied in this prophecy. Without the modern press it would not be possible for handwritten manuscripts to be so extensively published and so widely distributed.
An age of large-scale publication is also bound to be an age of intense proliferation of knowledge, research, and investigation. The Holy Quran emphasizes the role of the pen so powerfully that it directly attributes to God the act of teaching humans how to write.

.....to be continued

TaQWA KIDS

Department of Taleemul Qur'an and Waqfe Arzhi is adding a kids' page for the benefit of young children. Each issue will include stories of Allah's Prophets, peace be upon them all. In the previous issue you read about Hazrat Adam (as). Please send any questions/feedback to Amatus Shakoor Khan at shukrikhan@gmail.com. Jazak'Allah.

Stories of the Prophets: Hazrat Noah (as)

by: Attia Tul Haq, Austin

In a time long ago, there lived a great prophet named Hazrat Noah (as). He lived in a place called Mesopotamia which is found in present day Iraq. Most people are well aware of the story of Hazrat Noah (as). The Holy Qur'an mentions Hazrat Nuh (as) and the Great Flood many times. This incident was so important that Hazrat Masih Maud (as) wrote a book called Kashti Nuh in order to save people from spiritual downfall. In libraries, we can find many children's books as well as many videos depicting the Great Flood. We should be cautious when listening to these stories because they may be greatly exaggerated.

The people of Hazrat Nuh (as) worshipped idols. Some of the names of their main idols were Wadd, Suwa, Yaguth, Yauq, and Nasr. Allah sent Hazrat Nuh (as) to preach the message of the oneness of Allah and to perform His worship. But the people were arrogant and only the lowliest of them accepted the message of Hazrat Nuh (as). After some time, these mischievous people openly challenged him and said,

" O Noah, thou hast indeed disputed with us long and hast disputed with us many a time; bring us now that with which thou threatenest us, if thou are of those who speak the truth."

(Sura Hud, Verse 33)

After Noah's people refused to believe, Allah commanded Hazrat Nuh (as) to build an ark. The chiefs of his people would mock him and tell him he had gone mad. When the time came, Hazrat Nuh (as) boarded the ship with his followers and animals which would be needed to fulfill their basic needs. Soon the Great Flood followed and took with it all the non-believers. The Holy Qura'an describes it,

"Thereupon we opened the gates of heaven, with water pouring down; And We caused the Earth to burst forth with springs, so the two waters met for a purpose that was decreed."

(Sura Al-Qamar, Verse 12 & 13)

The Qur'an elaborates on the way that the flood waters consumed the land and people. Excessive rain poured down from above and the springs burst open from beneath causing a horrific disaster. Hazrat Nuh (as) asked Allah to save his son but Allah conveyed to him that his son was of the wrongdoers.

After sometime, Allah made that blessed Ark rest on mountain called Al-Judi. Hazrat Nuh (as)'s followers settled down in the land. After some time, they became absorbed into the community. Allah greatly blessed them and gave them material wealth. The people of Hazrat Nuh (as) continued to spread out to different lands. The story of the Great Flood also travelled with them. That is why it seems that many different cultures possess a version of this incident. May Allah enable us all to stay on the right path. Ameen.